

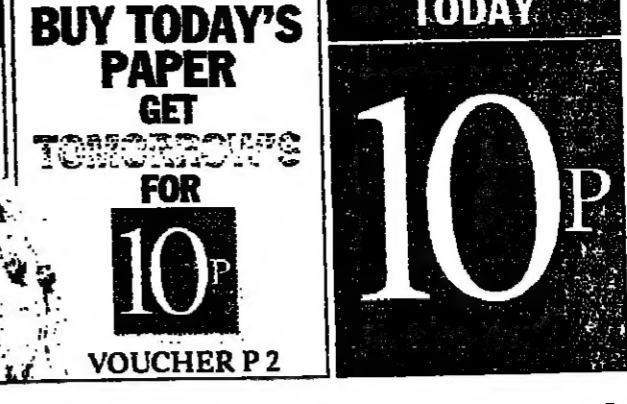
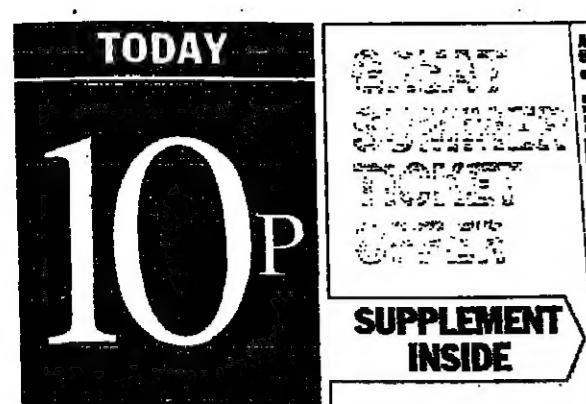
THE TIMES



No. 65,869

MONDAY APRIL 21 1997

1997
MONDAY APRIL 21



THIS WEEK IN

Science:
Mapping the
human face

Melvyn
Bragg on the
shock of the
new

The Queen's
Awards

TOMORROW

How to keep your brain healthy



PLUS:
Terrence
McNally
on his
controversial
new play
about
Maria Callas

WEDNESDAY

FASHION:
What's in this
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Bradberry on
the belted coat

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Will Cheltenham make
the final? Page 2

THURSDAY

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The
Return
of the Jedi

BOOKS
The legacy
of John
Wayne

CUP FEVER:
Manchester United's bid for
European glory

ROCK AND POP
Caitlin Moran and
David Sinclair on
the latest
releases

SATURDAY

Magazine
32 pages of House Style —
the space-age homes for
the millennium

PLUS: WEEKEND, CAR 97
WEEKEND MONEY
TV RADIO GUIDE

Major 'would advise Blair on handling Europe'

BY PETER RIDDELL

JOHN MAJOR has offered to give Tony Blair frank and private advice on how to handle negotiations in the European Union if Labour wins the general election. In an hour-long interview with *The Times* in Downing Street, Mr Major nonetheless says he is confident of winning the election. A relaxed and good-humoured

Prime Minister admitted he was "baffled" by the opinion polls showing a big Labour lead which "bear no relationship to what I feel going round the country". He said he was "having fun" during the campaign.

Dismissive protests about the Conservative Party advertisement showing a small Mr Blair on the knee of a giant Chancellor Helmut Kohl, he says: "Politics

has become so pompous." He describes the "rough and tumble of politics" as part of its charm.

Mr Major discloses for the first time that Conservative MPs would probably be offered a free vote in opposition, as well as in government, on any decision to take Britain into a single currency. This move would please pro-European Tory MPs who would strongly resist any move to

Full interview, page 9

outright opposition from a new Eurosceptic leader of the party. It would also help a Labour government to construct a cross-party majority if it eventually decided to enter.

He says: "If Tony Blair were Prime Minister and he asked my

advice about how to handle European negotiations, he could have it in complete privacy and in complete frankness."

Mr Major reveals the extent of his disillusionment with the way the EU now works and with the behaviour of other European leaders and the Brussels Commission and says that they are pushing the national interests too far and it will break up ... if it carries on as it is going."

MIKE WILKINSON

Feuding ministers cloud Tory comeback

BY PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

THE Prime Minister's attempts to launch a comeback in the ten days before polling were undermined yesterday by a public clash between Cabinet ministers over Europe that fuelled speculation about a post-election leadership contest.

As John Major tried to turn the spotlight from Europe to education, Kenneth Clarke directly contradicted Michael Howard's claim that the Amsterdam summit in June could threaten Britain's future as a nation state.

The Chancellor also suggested that far from being more sceptical than Labour and the Liberal Democrats, Tory policy on a single currency was "identical to both of the other parties".

The clash between Mr Clarke and Mr Howard prompted Gordon Brown to declare that the leadership battle was out in the open and Tony Blair to speak of the "civil war" raging in the Tory party. Paddy Ashdown said that ministers were fighting like ferrets in a sack.

Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, a former deputy party chairman who has been working closely with Mr Major, issued a sharp warning to those anticipating a leadership contest. "Their duty is quite simply to get behind the Prime Minister in this next two weeks and if they don't the party will remember very clearly," he told BBC News.

At the same time, John Redwood issued a loyalty statement after weekend newspapers suggested that his leadership cam-

aign was ready to roll. "I am only fighting one election — the general election," he said. "That is the election that matters and that is why I urge everyone to vote Conservative."

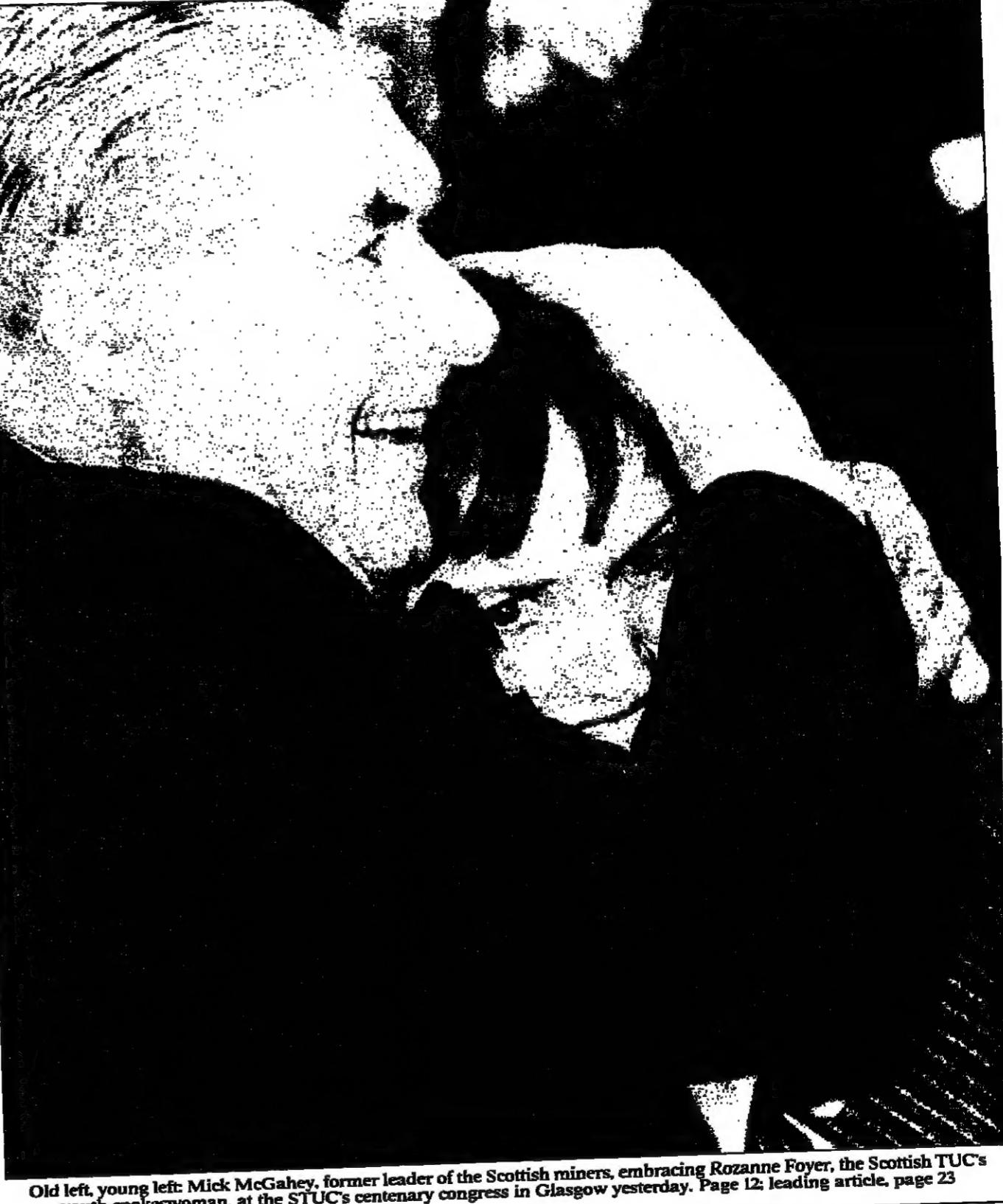
Mr Redwood, the beaten challenger in 1995, does, however, have several backers who would be ready for a swift leadership battle, and a Stop Redwood campaign is already emerging among supporters of several potential rivals, including Michael Portillo, Mr Howard and Mr Clarke.

Many senior MPs believe that Mr Major would want to go quickly if he were heavily defeated on May 1. But supporters of Cabinet contenders — who might also include Malcolm Rifkind, William Hague and Stephen Dorrell — intend to ask him to stay on as leader at least until July to give ministers time to organise their bids.

The leadership speculation intensified yesterday after Mr Howard told GMTV's *Sunday* programme: "The Amsterdam summit is so far-reaching that it would indeed put our survival as a nation state in question. That is the reality." But asked by the BBC's *On the Record* programme if he agreed, Mr Clarke said: "No, I don't think that

Continued on page 2, col 6

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Old left, young left: Mick McGahey, former leader of the Scottish miners, embracing Rozanne Foyer, the Scottish TUC's youth spokeswoman, at the STUC's centenary congress in Glasgow yesterday. Page 12; leading article, page 23

Mild at first, then severe frost — for 10,000 years

THE long-term weather forecast for Britain is freezing, but global warming will give us at least a thousand years of Mediterranean weather first (Nigel Hawkes writes).

Two British climatologists who have examined the great cycles of variation caused by changes in the Earth's orbit believe that we

are only ten millennia or so away from a period of extreme cold, with a new Ice Age to follow.

Dr Clare Goodess and Dr Jean Palutikof of the University of East Anglia say that if global warming is discounted, today's temperate weather is likely to be succeeded in two thousand years or so by "boreal" conditions

similar to those of north Norway and Sweden.

That would persist for almost 20,000 years before the country became as cold as southwest Alaska or north Russia. In about 50,000 years, things would get still worse, with 10,000 years of glacial conditions comparable to Greenland today. That might

make it impossible for big communities to survive in the North.

When global warming is considered, a different picture emerges. Mediterranean weather will set in for at least a thousand years — and possibly 10,000 — years. But once all the fossil fuel in the Earth's crust has been burnt a major cause of global warming

will disappear. There will then be 25,000 years of temperate climate before the thermometer takes a dip. After another 25,000 years of a boreal climate, periglacial conditions will set in.

Climates of the British Isles, Routledge (£65 and £19.99).

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TOM SHARPE

The Midden
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EMBEZZLEMENT. BRIBERY.
PERJURY. AND A TOUCH OF GBH.

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Ulster loyalists plotted attack on civil servants

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

POLICE in Northern Ireland have uncovered detailed plans by loyalist terrorists to murder civil servants working at the outskirt of Belfast. A major review of security has been introduced after the discovery that car movements by staff at the heavily fortified secretariat had been monitored.

More than 20 senior British and Irish civil servants formally liaise at the Maryfield secretariat, under the auspices of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. One source there said: "The information compiled by the loyalists has given us quite a shock."

Security had been relaxed following the loyalist ceasefire in October 1994. Irish civil servants will now be stopped from using the small Belfast City Airport, and will instead use RAF Aldergrove, 20 miles away, where they will be met by armed RUC guards. The

Maryfield source said: "The Irish civil servants have been using the special Shorts terminal at the city airport. But there is a concern that having the Irish airforce jet with its insignia waiting near the Shorts factory could cause difficulty because the workforce is predominantly Protestant."

An attack on the Maryfield secretariat, which is protected by barbed wire and 24-hour armed guards on the main road out of East Belfast, would mark a dramatic escalation of loyalist violence. The Ulster Defence Association has been blamed for a series of unclaimed terrorist attacks in the past five months, but the Government has insisted that the 30-month loyalist ceasefire is still in force. That position will be more difficult to sustain after the discovery.

The attack will have been planned by the Ulster Defence Association, the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Red Hand Commando or the newly formed dissident Loyalist Volunteer Force. The UDA, the UVF and the RHC come together under the umbrella of the Combined Loyalist Military Command which declared the ceasefire in October 1994. The LVF has been formed in recent weeks by hardline Loyalists.

The hardliners have long regarded the Maryfield secretariat as a prime target because the spacious offices give the Irish Government a formal consultative role in the affairs of Northern Ireland. The Irish joint secretary, David Donoghue, is entitled to consult his British opposite number, Peter Bell, on a range of issues from security to fair employment legislation. During last year's marching season, Irish civil servants at Maryfield regularly telephoned leaders of the nationalist residents' groups which opposed a series of Orange marches.

The evidence of a loyalist plan to attack Maryfield came as Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, gave a blunt warning that the IRA would maintain its terrorist campaign. In a speech to his party's annual conference in Monaghan, in the Irish Republic, he said: "The reality of British rule in Ireland means that the IRA remains a potent force in this situation, with volunteers like Diarmaid O'Neill [shot dead in London last September] prepared to unselfishly pit themselves against British rule in our country."

Mr Adams attempted to step up pressure on the next Government by hinting that the IRA would renew its ceasefire if Britain relaxed the conditions for Sinn Fein's entry to the Stormont talks. He demanded an assurance that Sinn Fein would be admitted to the talks immediately after a ceasefire and that the issue of terrorist arms would not be allowed to dominate the talks. The conference was delayed by two months to act as a springboard for the party's election campaign.

The number of political figures and officials receiving maximum protection, with round-the-clock armed bodyguards, is believed to be about 20. Extra precautions have been offered to other possible targets, and police have advised in daily routines.

The decision to tighten security comes amid a high general security alert on the mainland after a series of IRA blasts and hoaxes. MI5 and police intelligence officers believe the IRA strategy is highly unpredictable and could move up a gear. MI5, which provides the threat assessment, has been warning for some time that the IRA is likely to resort to a range of

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SAVINGS

Road rage victim is beaten with rice flail

By A STAFF REPORTER

A DRIVER beaten to the ground with a martial arts weapon in a "road-rage" attack underwent a five-hour operation yesterday. His family fear he may have suffered brain damage.

Jimmy Demetriou slumped to the ground in a pool of blood as the attacker, ignoring the screams of his daughter, Katrina, 13, and his wife, Suzanne, hit him seven times with a rice flail — two batons joined by a chain.

Mrs Demetriou, 34, said: "He smashed him virtually to death as he collapsed in my arms." She said the man "didn't give a damn and he didn't even bat an eyelid".

Speaking at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, east London, Mrs Demetriou said the attack happened when Mr Demetriou stopped his car shortly after leaving their home in Southgate, north London, on Saturday night to visit relatives.

Katrina, in the back seat, was scared they would be hit by a car following close.

Mr Demetriou, 35, a salesman, got out of his car and said: "What's your problem?" to the other driver, who had pulled up behind.

Mrs Demetriou said the attacker pulled out the rice flails and said: "This is my problem."

He struck Mr Demetriou as his wife raced around the car to try to help him. She said her daughter was running around in circles and screaming during the attack.

An 18-year-old man was being questioned by police yesterday.

Tory feud

Continued from page 1
survival of Britain as nation state is at risk because of our membership of the European Union."

There is irritation among some Tory strategists over Mr Clarke's stand. On Saturday, in the continuing row over the Tory advertisement showing Tony Blair sitting on Chancellor Kohl's knee, he said that claims that Europe was a threat were "paranoid nonsense" and yesterday he called for an end to the raising of imaginary European "plots" against Britain.

Other ministers played down the differences. Michael Heseltine said: "Both Ken and Michael are deeply opposed to changing Britain's immigration policy and handing it over to Europe. I know both of them are wholly opposed to a European defence policy and a European foreign policy."

Mr Blair meanwhile claimed that he was better placed to negotiate in Amsterdam because he would have a united government behind him. He told *The World This Weekend* on BBC Radio:

"Judge me by what I have done in the Labour Party. I have transformed it in the way I said I would. Judge Mr Major by how he has run the Conservative party which, 11 days away from the election, is in a state of civil war. Then judge who would best represent Britain in Europe."

Mr Brown said the controversy showed that the Tory Party had split into two. "This is the big one, Kenneth Clarke and Michael Howard have declared war on one another."

The two Tory parties are up and running and at one another's throats. Today will be seen as the first full day of the Tory leadership campaign."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Striking firemen face threat of suspension

Striking firefighters in Essex have been threatened with suspension and told they will not be paid for missing part of their shift (Lin Jenkins writes). The Fire Brigades Union said the threat could escalate if firemen returned to work yesterday after a 24-hour walkout. Some were told that their pay for a whole shift would be docked even though they missed only an hour's work to comply with the union action. The union says the action has 100 per cent support. The firemen are striking over council spending cuts.

Essex County Council said it would suspend all fire crews if more strikes were called beyond the two four-hour stoppages scheduled for today and tomorrow. An official for the union said the council's response made it more difficult to settle the dispute over planned changes in the service to meet financial targets. "If they seriously believe that by docking our pay and threatening us with suspension they will help resolve this dispute, they are grossly underestimating our response," he said. During the stoppage, two of the 25 Army Green Goddesses and eight RAF rescue tenders covering the 18 fire stations, broke down as they answered more than 80 minor or malicious calls. Talks aimed at resolving the dispute ended without agreement last week.

Hargreaves death plea

The husband of the climber Alison Hargreaves is asking a Scottish court to declare her officially dead. Ms Hargreaves, 33, vanished 20 months ago while climbing in Pakistan on K2, the world's second highest peak. It was accepted that she had plunged to her death, but her body has never been recovered from the crevasses and ravines of the high glaciers. Now Jim Ballard has asked Fort William Sheriff Court to rule that his wife, who is also survived by their two children — Tom, 8, and Kate, 6 — died on August 13, 1995. Ms Hargreaves had earlier become the first woman to climb Mount Everest alone and without bottled oxygen. Three months later she similarly reached the summit of K2.

'Scots uprising' apology

The Ministry of Defence has apologised to people in the Outer Hebrides after soldiers on war games were told, in an unapproved scenario, to pretend to suppress a local uprising. About 400 members of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, among those involved in Exercise Spring Challenge in the Western Isles, were briefed to subdue the island populations of Benbecula and Uist. Troops were told that they were taking part in a simulated invasion of Benbecula because a newly formed Scottish government had asked the English for help to quash the threat of a Hebridean uprising. Some soldiers pretended to be rebel crofters trying to seize a Rapier missile system.

Hunt for missing tycoon

Israeli police have asked British detectives for their help in finding a missing multimillionaire who was a former director of Blackburn Rovers football club. Walter Hubert, 65, lived in St Anne's in Lancashire before emigrating to Israel ten years ago. He was director of the football club in the 1960s and 1970s and had served in the posts of vice-chairman and finance director. Mr Hubert, who is believed to suffer from a heart condition, is reported to have flown from Jerusalem to London on March 10. He is then reported to have visited the Czech Republic and Germany. The millionaire was last seen on March 20, when two business associates met him in Frankfurt.

Horror through the post

Four classic figures from horror literature will stare out from a new set of Royal Mail stamps issued on May 13. The stamps, featuring Dracula, right, Frankenstein's monster, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and the Hound of the Baskervilles, include details in ultra-violet ink which will glow in the dark. The technique highlights Dracula's castle in front of a glowing moon and bolts of lightning behind Frankenstein.



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CHANGING TIMES

THE TIMES MONDAY APRIL 21 1997

Activists attack beagle breeder's home

Mother and two children cower as house is stormed

By DAREH GREGORIAN

A WOMAN and her two young children cowered in terror as animal welfare protesters attacked their home with bricks and bottles at the weekend.

Alison Little, 28, was alone with her seven-month-old daughter and son aged 4 when activists looking for her husband shattered windows and tried to kick in the front door of the house in Belmont, Hereford.

The protesters were among 250 who had earlier clashed with police at a beagle breeding kennel in Hereford and Worcester, where Adam Little is manager. The group, numbering about a dozen, smashed five windows before fleeing when police arrived.

"I was lucky because a neighbour who saw the protesters arriving rang me to warn me they were on their way," Mrs Little said. "I rang 999, drew the curtains, and then scooped up my baby daughter, Amber, and told Laurence to go upstairs."

During the assault on Saturday, "they were shouting abuse and they said this was my punishment for being married to a 'murdering bastard'. When they started throwing things at the house I was absolutely terrified.

"I tried to explain to my little

boy what was going on because they were shouting things and he could hear the windows smashing. Then I heard the back gate going and I heard the back patio window being smashed. There was glass all over the floor and a brick had been hurled through the window.

"It was at that point that I picked up my baby and pushed my little boy into the corner away from the windows and told him to go upstairs for a few minutes.

"I then peered out of the small windows in the front door, which had been smashed, and saw a man wearing a black balaclava just staring at me with my baby in my arms. I was absolutely petrified and told them I was on my own with two small children, but I don't think they believed me.

"The lounger window then came through and I was scared they were going to climb in. If they had got in I don't want to think about what they might have done."

The family spent last night at a different address and Mrs Little said they were going to move from the newly built house they moved into 23 months ago. "I respect these people's views, but for the sake of the children we have got to



Adam Little and some of the damage to his house after the attack at the weekend. The family plans to move

move. You never know what will be next. It could be a petrol bomb," Mrs Little said, adding: "They may say they love animals, but they scared the hell out of our cat, Winky."

Mr Little, 30, was at his job at Consort Kennels at Harewood End, near Ross-on-Wye, when the attack hap-

pened. "My children or my wife could have been hurt and I can't see that smashing windows is anything to do with loving animals," Mr Little said.

He said all the beagles at the kennels were well cared for, and although some were used for biomedical research, none

was used in research to test the safety of cosmetics.

Over 200 activists targeted

Consort Kennels earlier in the day. A police spokesman said that most became "engaged in a concerted and violent attack on the premises and police officers present". Several officers were injured, one being

knocked unconscious. Twenty-four people were arrested at that protest and more arrests are expected, the spokesman said.

Police have not made any arrests connected with the assault on the Littles' home and are appealing for witnesses.

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A ROBBER tortured a pub landlady to force her to open a safe and then stabbed his victim to death, detectives said yesterday.

Police believe he then dragged her upstairs and stabbed her in the neck. As he made his way out of the pub he also took an empty gallon whisky bottle which was filled with cash, mainly banknotes, collected from a bar lottery to fund a pensioners' outing.

The dead woman was found on Friday morning by a barman who lives on another floor of the premises.

As regulars laid flowers outside the pub, Miss Fyfe's boyfriend, who is a postman, was said to be in shock.

Her mother, Catherine, said she had spoken to her daughter the night before she died. She said: "She was the best daughter a mother could wish for. She never did any harm to anyone. What kind of a madman could do this?"



Carol Fyfe beaten and stabbed in the neck

Five killed in stolen car as they flee police

By RUSSELL JENKINS

FIVE young men died in a stolen car early yesterday after speeding away from a police patrol. The car broke in half when it hit a tree at 80mph. (Russell Jenkins writes).

Relatives later placed flowers at the crash scene at Crumpsall, Manchester. The dead were aged from 16 to the early 20s, and three are thought to have lived in the same road. Fingerprints were being taken from the bodies to aid identification.

The Ford Orion had been reported stolen a few hours earlier by a student at Salford University. Two police officers on routine patrol in a dog van indicated for it to stop when it made a sudden halt near them at traffic lights shortly after midnight.

The stolen car accelerated away, executed an erratic U-turn across the central reservation and heading towards Cheadle, going through two sets of traffic lights. Police said that the pursuit lasted only one minute and 25 seconds before the car spun out of control after swerving to avoid another vehicle.

At that point, the police van was 150 yards behind with its siren wailing. Officers were



Lady White sells up for new life on Idaho farm

By DALYA ALBERG

astonished that the car split into two, with the separate sections coming to rest at least 20 yards apart. Chief Superintendent Peter Harris, of Greater Manchester police, said: "It is probably the worst accident that some of us have ever seen. The officers in the van were quite shaken up."

Clive Heather, an operations manager for Greater Manchester ambulance service, said: "I have never witnessed the carnage that I saw. The devastation is quite traumatic."

One bunch of flowers left at the crash scene said: "To our kid, I'll miss you always."

Another said: "To Jamie, Shaun, Peter and John. I will miss you always. Brian, Karl and Steve."

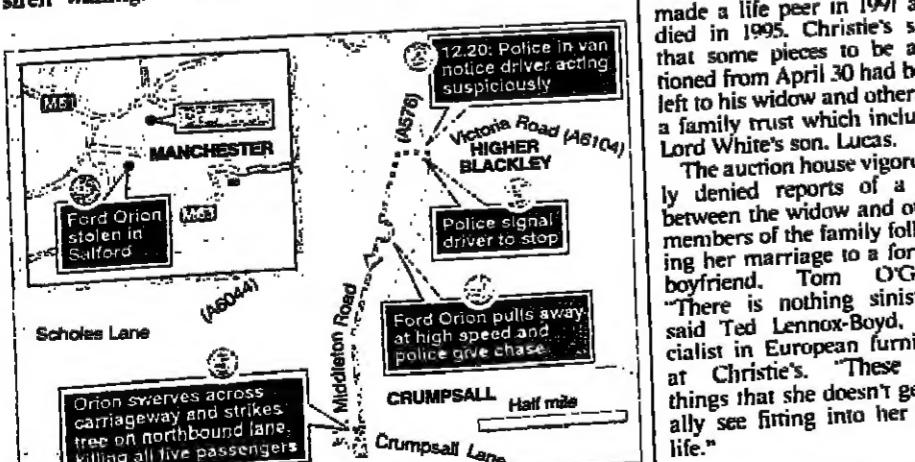
Bereavement counsellors

were trying to help relatives.

One victim's brother, who refused to be named, said:

"This has devastated five families. There are five mums who have all lost sons because of this. We have come here to try to work out what happened. The police should not have been chasing them."

A police inspector from the Wigan division and the Accident Investigation Unit will investigate the incident.



Complaints spur watchdog to pull plug on Mr Angry

By STEPHEN FARRELL

MR ANGRY, the irate Father and other telephone pranksters should soon be a scourge of the past after the industry watchdog abruptly lost its sense of humour.

Hoax premium-rate calls so beloved of practical jokers have prompted many complaints. Practical jokers tell victims to call a number. They are then strung along by a recorded tape.

Last year 220 complaints were made to Ofcom, the Independent Committee For the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services, with a further 139 in the first quarter of 1997. Most

victims protest at the waste of time and money, but some expressed anxiety about the content.

The most common "wind-ups" include an irate father accusing the caller of making his daughter pregnant with triplets; a supposed Army barracks asking why the victim has not reported for active service in Bosnia and a woman constantly being interrupted by dogs barking.

One woman was so upset by a Mr Angry service that she called the police. Another collapsed after believing she had spoken to a driver moments before he crashed his

car.

The services cost between 39p and 45p a minute, with 30 per cent going to the company that rents the line and the remainder to the firm responsible for how it is used.

One hoax lasted eight minutes and cost £3.84 at peak rates. A Bristol company was fined £3,402 after 25 complaints. Ictis plans to take emergency procedures to cut off companies that fail to warn people a practical joke is being played.

An Ictis spokeswoman said: "People do not know they are talking on a premium-rate line."

Killer tortures pub landlady to death for takings in safe

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A ROBBER tortured a pub landlady to force her to open a safe and then stabbed his victim to death, detectives said yesterday.

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As regulars laid flowers outside the pub, Miss Fyfe's boyfriend, who is a postman, was said to be in shock.

Her mother, Catherine, said she had spoken to her daughter the night before she died. She said: "She was the best daughter a mother could wish for. She never did any harm to anyone. What kind of a madman could do this?"

Appealing for witnesses, Detective Superintendent John Yates said: "It is an horrific murder. It was highly sadistic to kill this defenceless woman for what is in reality a paltry sum of money. There was no reason to kill her. It is appalling."

Regarded as a successful publican, Miss Fyfe, who came from Edinburgh, had been managing the Prince Arthur for Whitbread for about 2½ years. The pub, in Eversholt Road close to the station, was described yesterday as a typical London local.

Police believe that the killer slipped out of one of the bars and hid elsewhere in the building. Miss Fyfe locked up, cashed the money from the tills and then got undressed for bed in her room on the second floor. Her pet bull terrier Sid was with her.

Her killer seized her. She tried to struggle but was beaten about the head. She



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• Relaunch for lottery cards after nation loses itch to scratch

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE National Lottery is planning to relaunch scratchcards in an attempt to improve sales. Camelot scratchcard sales dropped to a record low of £14 million in the first week of April, from a high of £44.4 million in May 1995. Louise White, a spokeswoman for Camelot, said the company was working on a host of ways to revive the game, which donates 25p in the pound to charity. These include a marketing push, a television game show and scores of games offering innovative prizes.

"We did predict that the market would drop, but we would not want it to fall any lower. It is not a disaster, but if it gets any lower we will not reach our targets," she said. Ms White said that Camelot had applied to the lottery regulator, Ofslot, for permission to run a television game show linked to scratchcards.

Details of the game have not been confirmed, but it is expected that some cards will carry a special panel, which players would scratch for the chance of a place on the game show. On the show they would compete for cash and luxury prizes. The BBC, which has the contract to screen the National Lottery draw until the autumn, has the first option on the show.

Ms White said that the company was also reconsidering its marketing approach to scratchcards. "We need to look at the instant as a brand to

see if they are positioned properly," she said.

The company has found that scratchcard games with the highest jackpot prizes do not necessarily sell best. Frequently the games that offer lower prizes, but higher odds on winning, perform better.

One of the most successful lines of Camelot scratchcard featured a picture of a pig with wings and was called Pigs Might Fly, which had a top prize of £10,000 and which was issued last July. The odds on winning a prize were one in four, rather than the usual one in five.

Camelot sold 62 million Pigs Might Fly cards — almost as many as in its Christmas Bonus scratchcard game in December 1995 which had a record top prize of £10,000.

Lisa Bond, a spokeswoman for Camelot, said: "Trivial and humorous things seem to appeal to consumers, not necessarily just the big jackpots."

Ms Bond said that the company was also considering importing several scratchcard games from the Continent.

One popular version of the game in Europe does not pay out a single jackpot. Instead winners get a fixed sum at regular intervals. "The prize could be £100 a month for the next year," Ms Bond said.

Camelot launched its first scratchcard game in March 1995. The decline in scratch-

card sales can be dated back to the week in January 1996 when Camelot's online lottery game offered its first double rollover jackpot. Camelot's main scratchcard rival, Littlewoods, has also seen its sales decline to around £1 million a week, from roughly double that.

Andrew Slavin, director of sales and marketing with Littlewoods scratchcards, said: "The market constantly needs new products to keep going. We have found that each game should not last more than ten to 12 weeks."

Sales of Camelot's online game are stable. Since a second weekly online draw was introduced in February, weekly sales have risen by 20 per cent to around £97 million a week. Saturday draw sales have declined slightly from around £60 million to £50 million, but the midweek draw is now selling around 27 million tickets a week.



Peter Tatchell of the gay rights group Outrage! confronting Dr Carey in the gardens of Lambeth Palace yesterday

Gay rights protesters confront archbishop

By LIN JENKINS

GAY rights campaigners waved banners when they ambushed the Archbishop of Canterbury yesterday at a photocall in his palace garden for 16 primates from around the world. Dr George Carey was clearly angry as Peter Tatchell, of OutRage!, berated him over the Church of England's stance on homosexuality.

He told Mr Tatchell that his manner was offensive and asked him to leave. Scuffles broke out as palace staff tried to restrain Mr Tatchell when he grabbed Dr Carey's arm.

Dr Carey, who is hosting a meeting to plan next year's Lambeth Conference, was showing his visitors around the gardens at Lambeth Palace. Mr Tatchell and nine other protesters had climbed over the wall and hidden in bushes.

Mr Tatchell said the action was in response to Dr Carey's refusal to meet the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement and comments rejecting clergy participation in homosexual relationships.

MEDICAL BRIEFING

TV inquisitor's penetrating gaze hides blind spot

FEW of Mrs Merton's fans have noticed that she has one very dominant eye. When Mrs Merton strips the veneer from her victims, she does it with an outrageous question, an amusing little laugh and her famous penetrating stare, all the more remarkable as she is almost blind in one eye.

Caroline Aherne, who plays Mrs Merton, a spoof elderly television chat-show host, was born with a retinoblastoma, a malignant growth on the retina, which affects about one in every 20,000 children. Retinoblastoma is not always an hereditary disease, but it is in the 10 per cent of cases where other members of the family are affected and in the 20-30 per cent of cases in which both eyes are affected by the tumour.

Anyone who suffers from the inherited form of the disease, as Ms Aherne does, has a 50-50 chance of passing the gene responsible for the condition to the next generation.

Inheriting the gene does not always result in the recipient developing a tumour, as only about 20 per cent of the children who have it become carriers, free of the cancer but capable of later passing it to their children.

As Ms Aherne has a family history of the disease — her brother is also affected, and in his case both eyes have been involved — any child she might have would have an even chance of having a

retinoblastoma. Not unreasonably, she says she has decided not to take the risk. Although rare, tumour retinoblastomas account for about 2 per cent of the cancers which are diagnosed in children. The diagnosis is usually made before the child is two.

If the cancer is treated in its earlier stages, the therapy is nearly always life preserving. If only one eye has been affected it can be removed. If both eyes are affected the worst can be taken out and the other treated with radiation; other methods involve laser treatment and chemotherapy.

Ms Aherne has described how her elder brother's eye troubles were first diagnosed because their mother noticed that when a light shone into them the pupil appeared to be white rather than black. She was describing a sign which is now known as the "cat's eye pupil". Once suspicion has been aroused, further tests can define the extent of the disease.

About 70 per cent of patients with the inherited form of the disease will, despite the treatment they already have, develop a second tumour.

This new growth may either occur in a previously untreated part of the retina or, in about half the cases, in an area already irradiated. Further treatment is then needed.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

News Release

21 April 1997

NATWEST LAUNCHES A FREE WINDFALL SHARE GUIDE

Shares in Alliance & Leicester are due to begin trading today on the stock market. To coincide with this flotation, NatWest has launched a free guide to windfall shares.

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Pages of instant history crumbling to dust

By ALAN HAMILTON

A NATIONAL archive of great importance is gradually turning to dust in a wholly unsuitable building in an obscure corner of north London.

The British Library newspaper library at Colindale is the repository of the nation's press. More than 600,000 bound volumes fill 18 miles of shelving, and each year some 40,000 researchers dig in the library's boundless mine of instant history.

But newspapers contain the seeds of their own destruction. Cheap wood-pulp paper, introduced in the 1840s and in universal use as newsprint ever since, is chemically unstable and has a limited shelf life. As a result, dozens of the library's volumes are now so fragile, and on the verge of

crumbling to brown powder, that they can no longer be made available to readers.

Built in 1930, the library is an antiquated warren with no means of controlling temperature or humidity to protect the newspapers from decay. It is also bursting at the seams: volumes have to be stored upright, rather than flat, which aids preservation.

Under copyright law, publishers must send a copy of every edition to Colindale; last year alone it was deluged with 180,000 copies of Britain's 2,700 newspaper titles.

The answer, say librarians, is microfilming, and all newspapers now arriving are bid for a lottery grant to finance a backlog of filming: no fewer



John Byford inspects some of the fragile newspapers

have 320,000 reels of it. However, a vast stock of older newspapers still exists only in delicate printed form, and is in danger of being lost forever.

The library is preparing a bid for a lottery grant to finance a backlog of filming: no fewer

than 11 million newspaper pages are at risk, and it would cost an estimated £1.8 million to film them.

Librarians prefer microfilm to scanning the papers with an electronic reader and storing their contents on com-

puter. Film, they argue, is simple and permanent in a century's time, today's digital technology may well have gone the way of the wax gramophone cylinder.

Curiously, many of Colindale's best-preserved newspapers are its oldest. Copies of the *Edinburgh Gazette* of 1699, or the *Cambridge Journal* of the 1720s, printed on virtually indestructible paper made from rags, have deteriorated little since they hit the streets.

Colindale is the poor relation of the British Library, and its annual budget of around £12.5 million is loose change when compared with the £500 million cost of building the British Library's state-of-the-art headquarters at St Pancras, which already has no room for the newspaper collection.

But Colindale is so well used that last year it had to open an additional reading room to reduce the queues. John Byford, the librarian, said he received more than 1,000 applications for readers tickets each year, and the number was growing.

"There is a rising awareness among students of all disciplines of what newspapers can provide. They are valuable because they record what is happening in the time. They are immediate: they tell you far more than books, often written years later, of what was going on at a particular time."

His customers are a varied lot. Many are tracing family history, a good few are lawyers honing up on the background to a case, some are novelists researching period

colour, and a steady trickle are the merely curious who ask for back copies of *Radio Times* to see what was on television 30 years ago.

Irish historians often make their way to Mr Byford's front door. Since the Irish set fire to many of their own archives during the troubles of 1921, Colindale retains the world's best collection of Irish newspapers. It also claims to have the only complete collection in existence of *The Sun*.

However, the title most in demand is, naturally, *The Times*. While lesser journals are bound for the library shelves in common old buckram, we are gratified to record that copies of this newspaper are clothed in the finest goat-skin morocco.

Letters, page 23

NEWS IN BRIEF

Leaflet drop for Kashmir hostages

Relatives of two British hostages captured in Kashmir 21 months ago have dropped leaflets by helicopter appealing for information. Paul Wells and Keith Mangan were among six hostages taken in July 1995 by terrorists opposed to Indian rule in Kashmir. Bob Wells, Paul's father, Catherine Moseley, his girlfriend, and Julie Mangan, Mr Mangan's wife, were accompanied by James Bowman of the Hostages in Kashmir campaign.

Rail workers hurt

Three rail workers were injured, one seriously, when a train clipped the trackside scaffolding where they were carrying out bridge repairs on the line between Lewes and Eastbourne in Sussex. The accident, involving a ballast train, happened near Glynde.

Horses corralled

Dublin is to get a special horse pound after a number of people have been injured by stray horses. A baby was recently hurt when a runaway horse overturned his pram. The pound will be secure and owners will have to pay to reclaim their animals.

Hospital Bill

A hospital has been given its own policeman to combat crime and violence against staff. Special Constable Lloyd Tyrell is to patrol Kettering General Hospital as a part of his beat, said Northamptonshire Police. Security cameras are also to be installed.

Brewers' hiccup

A beer festival was unable to open for a final session yesterday at Tucker's Maltings in Newton Abbot, Devon, because it ran out of beer. About 14,000 pints plus back-up supplies had been drained since Thursday night after 4,000 real ale fans arrived.

Queen in drag

A town carnival which could not find a procession queen last year is prepared to enrol a man in drag for this year's event. Janet Barber, the carnival chairman at Okehampton, Devon, said: "If a young man wanted to come forward for fun, we would be happy."

Roy Kinnear in *Hot Water*, a 1978 commercial for home improvement grants

Classic propaganda films offer second take on vanished Britain

By VALERIE ELLIOTT
WHITEHALL EDITOR

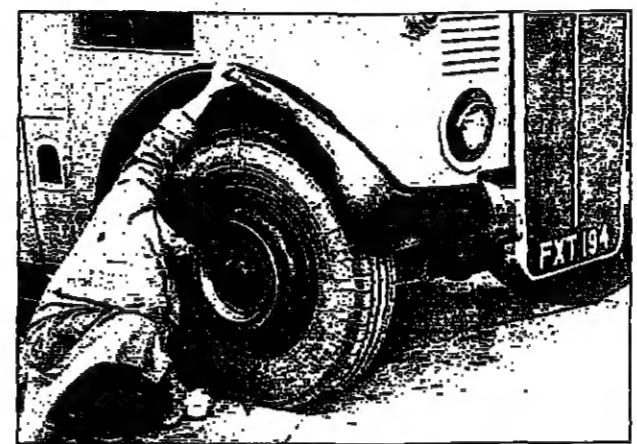
GOVERNMENT propaganda films are to be marketed for the first time by a private company. The black and white reels, many used as cinema shorts after the Second World War, are to be made available to television, film and CD-Rom producers.

The films come from an era when government advertisements were polite — no hard-hitting warnings about Aids, for example — and staffed by characters of the type latterly satirised by Harry Enfield.

Charley, the cynical Englishman who did not believe the promises of the National Health Service, is just one cartoon character who could be set for a comeback. "Why should I pay National Insurance?" was one of his catchphrases. He was the original British moaning Minnie, used to sell the merits of the NHS and how it would work.

The 1970s "Clunk Click Every Trip" message from Jimmy Savile persuaded the country to belt up behind the wheel, while children will remember how they were taught to cross the road with the Green Cross Code.

In the light of the *E. coli* outbreak, *Clean Food* might deserve a rerelease. The 1950s film reminded people about



On the road: a bus inspector checks safety rules; the Green Cross Man warns children

personal hygiene and instructed butchers how to store and display meat.

Richard Massingham's public information trailers might also be revived. "Coughs and sneezes spread diseases" was one of his creations.

The official moving image of British daily life has been chronicled for the past 50 years by the Central Office of Information, which promotes the British way of life abroad and delivers public messages at home. Last week more than 10,000 films were transferred from the COI's headquarters in Waterloo to vaults near Euston Station, London, in readiness for pos-

sible reuse. The Crown will retain copyright and ownership and the Treasury hopes to generate some income.

Peter Fidler, of Film Images, which will market the clips said last night: "We are going to transfer all the old film on to video and we are going to compile new listings of the available material. There is so much fascinating material here."

"It could be ideal for nostalgic television shows and for any independent producers wishing to show how Britain was."

The move represents the end of an era for Peter Steel, who has worked in the film division at the COI for 37

years. He is to retire shortly, but last night said of the films: "They are nostalgic and educational. It is a wonderful way to see how we were. One of the most amusing films is *Journey on a London Bus*. It was made for the African colonies and you see two Africans arriving in London and boarding a bus for the first time. There is no queue-jumping, no pushing, everyone is polite, and the driver makes every effort to keep his bus on time."

"It's a 'feelgood' factor, but we made the film to show the colonies how to operate a bus. It was to influence people about our way of life and society."

Clergy wives afraid to tell of violence

CLERGYMEN'S wives who suffer mental, physical or sexual abuse by their husbands hesitate to ask the Church for help for fear of being turned away, according to researchers (Daren Gregorin an writes).

The study also cites clerical abuse of women from outside the Church who had sought counselling. It urges church leaders to recognise the problem and to

establish a code of conduct with disciplinary measures to deal with abusers. Researchers at Edinburgh University conducted a two-year study involving interviews with 23 women who had suffered violence from church leaders.

They included six clergy wives. One woman from the North of England lived with physical abuse from her vicar husband for 22 years before getting a

divorce. She tells her story on BBC1's *Here and Now* tonight. Lesley MacDonald, who co-ordinated the project, said: "Rather than giving refuge and support to the victims of abuse, the Church has tended to give refuge to the perpetrators of abuse. There has been a tendency for a closing of ranks." She will present the findings to church leaders at a conference in Edinburgh on Saturday.

All-night wait leaves opera fans standing

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A PENSIONER and his daughter queued for almost 18 hours to be first in line for tickets for the new Glyndebourne season. They could afford standing tickets only.

Jeffrey Lever, 67, and his daughter, Kate, 29, were among 450 opera lovers waiting when the box office opened for personal callers on Saturday morning in East Sussex. They had arrived at 3.30pm on Friday from Dorking, Surrey.

Ms Lever, a care assistant for the elderly and disabled, said: "We brought camp beds and blankets and slept right in front of the booking office."

On a limited budget, they bought £10 tickets for Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The majority of seats cost between £57 and £114, although some are between £16 and £36. Priority is given to members of the Festival Society, followed by those on the waiting list. The wait for membership is about 25 years. However, the number of tickets sold is restricted so that up to 40 per cent are available to the general public.

Ms Lever said: "It saddens me that seats are so expensive." Her father said: "We got about five hours' sleep. There were 45 to 50 people by midnight. There was good feeling, lots of merriment."

A Glyndebourne spokesman said: "People brought picnics and flasks. Some had a Buck's Fizz breakfast. It was like the festival but in woullies. It's that British thing about queuing. It's heartwarming."

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TSB	12.8% £1,104.00	£11.68	£5,144.00	£324.00
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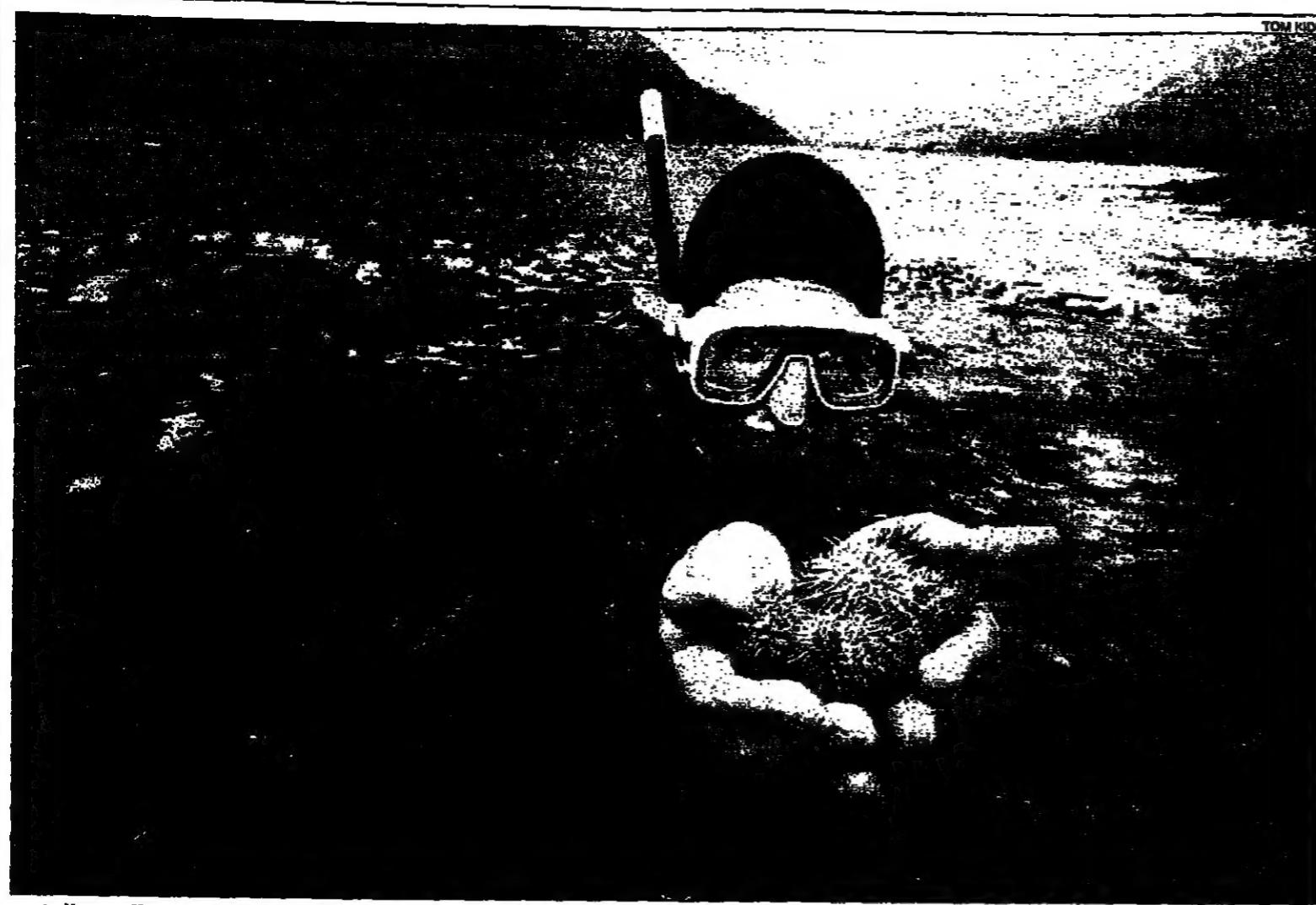
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A diver collects sea urchin samples in Loch Crinan, north of Oban. Farmed urchin roe has been sent to France for gastronomic approval

Robot puts Daisy in charge of the milking

By MICHAEL HORNSEY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE fully automated milking parlour, in which cows come to be milked when the urge takes them and without need of direct human assistance, is about to change the face of British dairy farming.

On April 9, at a research farm near Winchester in Hampshire, the first cows began being milked not by a farmhand but by a computer-guided robot. Nearly two weeks on, they are still showing every sign of enjoying the experience.

"We have been astonished by how quickly the cows adapted," Bridget Drew, head of dairy research at the centre, said. "We will need six months to be sure there are no unforeseen hitches, but so far things look promising."

"I believe automated milking is better for the cows and could remove much of the drudgery from dairy farming, particularly for the small family outfit where the son does not want to get up at 4am after a late night out."

The system is being tested at Adas Bridgets, one of a network of experimental centres run by the newly privatised Agricultural Development and Advisory Service, the former research and consultancy arm of the Ministry of Agriculture. About 20 cows.



A cow in the trial wears its transponder collar

Stress gives eels that sinking feeling

By A STAFF REPORTER

DEPRESSED eels are to have their problems examined in a £1 million project organised by the European Commission. Eel farmers have found that the normally active creatures are turning listless and sinking to the bottom of their tanks.

Eels are now classed as one of the most expensive delicacies in the world, but it is thought that attempts to take advantage of the market have led to behavioural stress.

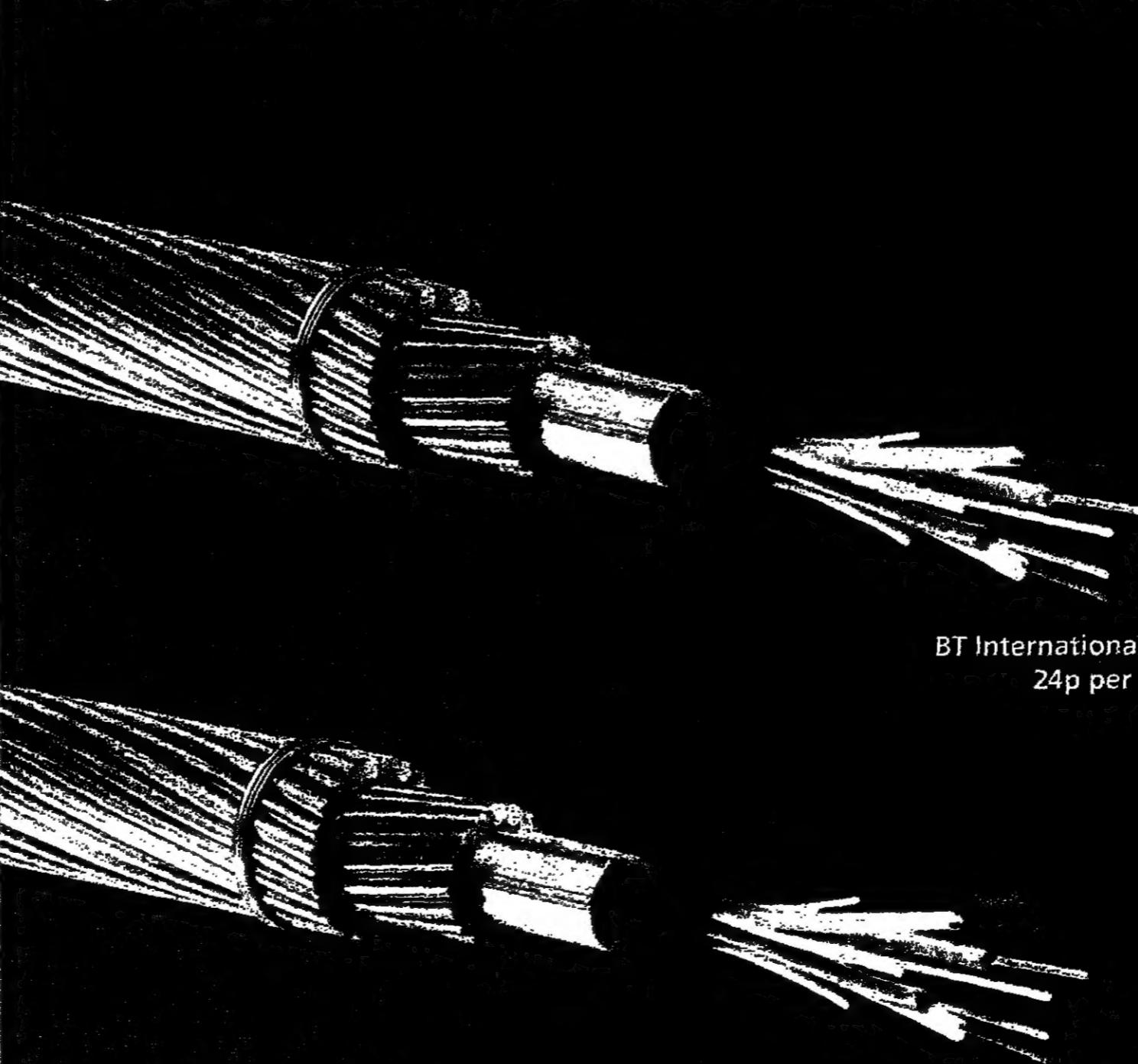
Two British scientists, Stewart Owen and David McKenzie from Birmingham University, who have been allocated £48,000 of the grant, will be among a team travelling to an experimental plant near Milan for a year of research. Dr Owen, 28, a psychologist, said: "Eels have

become a real delicacy in Europe, Japan and China, but they are about six times more expensive than salmon."

"Not enough are caught to keep up with demand, so eel farming has become an expanding industry across Europe. Farms raise the eels to market size in large recirculating water systems."

"The carbon dioxide produced by the growing fish dissolves in the water and increases its acidity, causing respiratory problems and behavioural stresses which reduce productivity. The eels simply use up all of their energy and sink to the bottom of the tank. I will be looking at the behaviour of the eels and what happens when there is less carbon dioxide in the tanks."

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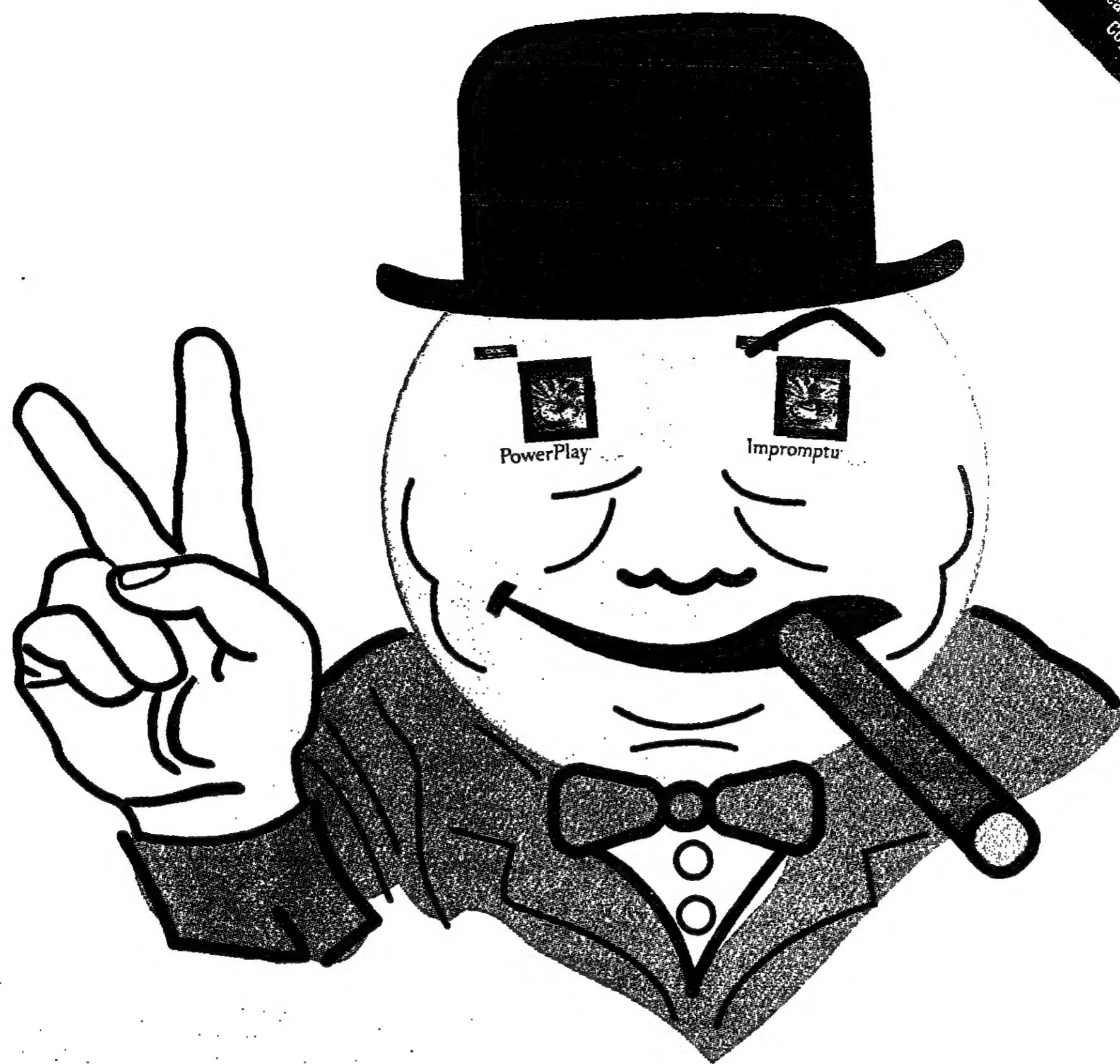
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ELECTION 97



'Anonymous' gives his verdict on the Blair campaign

'Primary Colors' author on the hustings

Quentin Letts - page 10

"Suddenly everyone is talking about life after the election"

Nicholas Wapshott - page 10

Inside Labour's secret nerve centre

Details - page 11

Major looks to his place in history

MATTHEW COOK

The Times, continuing its interviews with party leaders, talks to the Prime Minister

BY PETER STOTHARD

I have not had any experience of leading a party in opposition," says the Prime Minister to Peter Riddell at the start of our interview in Downing Street on Saturday morning. But if a Labour government were to try to take Britain into a single European currency, "I would probably allow backbenchers a free vote."

We have barely settled ourselves in the White Drawing Room's armchairs. I have only just noted John Major's diamond-patterned sweater and the sharp spring light through the casements that illuminate this comfortable, familiar person of government. The very words "in opposition" suddenly make it all seem different.

Major is carefully answering Riddell's question about the Conservative Party's chronic disunity. He is quiet, confident and only occasionally tense. But it is hard to concentrate on what he is saying. My thoughts swim out and past the man who is sitting in front of us and forward into future questions that most of us have yet fully to confront.

What would a Tory free vote in opposition mean? Would Major really be the man who granted it? Would Tory leadership challengers Michael Portillo or Michael Howard match the pledge? Or would they risk a split in the party by insisting on a united Conservative front to save sterling? Surely a free vote would make it easier for Tony Blair to take Britain into EMU, relying on opposition disarray and an extra 50 or more Tory votes on top of his own?

The Prime Minister is already warning us about such speculation. "I would probably allow backbenchers a free vote and, before this is subjected to hieroglyphic textual analysis, I say 'probably' because that is my inclination," he says with one of his unendearing smiles. But speculation is impossible to avoid. Major is to look a long way back in the next hour of conversation, reassessing his record, seeing his successes and mistakes placing himself in Tory history and opening up new avenues of thought about what will happen next.

Riddell poses the question of a future free vote on EMU once again. Even if Major is not to be the Tory leader, he can certainly now set the opening terms for his successor. "I would discuss it with the Shadow Cabinet," he says, "but on an issue like this, the like of which we have not seen before, I don't think that it is an impossible whip." His thumb quivers rapidly as he speaks, as though such decisions of opposition are as unimaginable as the whip would be unimposable. This is a Prime Minister who, like his party, is only half-prepared for defeat.

Major denies that he feels personally isolated by the defections from party policy of so many MPs over the past week. He persists in his protestations that they are unwise, wrong and may yet return to



his path after the election. But what does the man who has been negotiating for Britain really feel now about monetary union? No one knows.

The proud mask of the negotiator has obscured the truth from everyone. Our columnist, Anatole Kaletsky, pushes at this notoriously resistant

disguise to seek an answer.

"If you want to know the gut instinct in is here," Major replies, "it is that I would like Europe to work ... but that their economic policies are wrong ... and that our partners are pushing the national patience in more than one country to such an extent that they may end up weakening their institutions." This answer, which in its original form is at considerable and informative length, is still unsatisfactory on the question of the Prime Minister's own instincts about the future.

He is clear enough about the precipitate judgment of those Conservative colleagues who have abandoned his policy of "negotiate and decide". He suggests that their resistance is merely polling-day deep: "They are facing an election and they are setting out what their instincts are." He refuses to admit that they form a new straitjacket around the Tory leadership: "If I had been worried about straitjackets over the past ten years, I would probably have been carried away in one." The flapping white coats, as we recall, were reserved for his opponents.

But what about his own verdict for or against, or even some sort of interim verdict? "What I will do what I happen to think is in the best interests of the country. It may not actually be what my innate instinct might be. I don't know what judgment I am going to reach. A world exists out there that intrudes into the cosy consensus that politicians may have."

This remark is addressed at all of us. But just as his interviewers have been looking, inevitably, beyond him to the problems of the next Tory leader, so the Prime Minister seems to be speaking less to us than to the next occupant of the drawing room in which we sit. He is about to offer Blair an extraordinary opportunity

for private lessons in the art of dealing with the devious Europeans who want to do Britain down.

He emphasises first that it is not the principle of closer European integration that he opposes but the policies, and particularly the people, which go with it. "If you say something that isn't approved by the Commission or hasn't previously been agreed by some of the large countries, it is like splitting in church. I am sick and tired of the fact that I split out the truth in politics every time I go to Europe and all I get repeated back here from them, with careful leaks from the Commission, is poor old Britain, isolated again."

This continuous pressure comes, he says, from an institution that is breaking, going in the wrong direction, pushing the national states too far and will break up if it carries on as it is going." Riddell asks him how long he has been so sick and tired of it all. "My views of Europe," he says, "have changed with the experience of sitting round the European table. It is impossible to sit round the table and not be cynical about the way in which business is conducted. And I resent that."

We ask if he thinks that Blair might take his offer up. He says that he doesn't know him well enough to judge. "We ask him what he means by that. 'Well, I don't see Tony sitting all day at a cricket

match with his feet up. He has other interests."

Kaletsky suggests that he could easily see Blair asking for his predecessor's advice. Major seems almost to be looking forward to the prospect. "But they wouldn't be the only things I would tell him. I have just scratched the surface of what I have learnt over the past few years about Europe. These things are more important than party politics."

Kaletsky then tries to return the conversation to what Major would want to achieve in these future negotiations whose details he insists on keeping secret — from everyone except his successor. If you were Prime Minister, he could have it — and in complete privacy and frankness. He could be absolutely certain that I would tell him what the positions of the others were."

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match with his feet up. He has other interests."

That is a matter that infringes upon ... [his voice fades away before it is clear what precisely it infringes upon] ... Parliament is based on the granting of supply; it is the very essence of parliament."

Major seems to have no objection in principle to Britain giving up its power to issue or to regulate its money. The Eurosceptics of his party may enjoy the rough rhetoric in this interview, but in the substance of our talk only "income taxation", not value-added tax, corporation tax or duties, was kept as an essence of British self-government.

As the level of his Highland Spring water marks the passage of our interviewing time, a gap between Major the frustrated negotiator and Major the frustrated campaigner grows ever more apparent. This is the gap at the very heart of the Prime Minister's European problem in this election.

Major the campaigner makes a fierce defence of the Blair-as-Kohl's-dummy poster. "Politics has become so pompous, Peter," he says to Riddell, recalling some of the hard ways that he himself has been portrayed over the years.

"There is a rough-and-tumble about politics that is part of its charm. Mockery is a legitimate political weapon and has been since the dawn of time."

He turns to me to criticise that morning's *Times* front page, which leads on Lord Howe's criticism of the poster. "I think politics is fun as well as important. I am astonished that a letter from Geoffrey Howe should have received such massive coverage in such a world-famous newspaper as *The Times*."

Major the negotiator takes a rather different view of political caricature and the requirement for simple black-and-white ideas and images. "I have been Prime Minister for six and a half years and how many people out there really understand what I know about Europe? You may say it is my failure. I long for the capacity to have these big issues crystallised in a straightforward way that does not mislead the public. In crystallising it, you so often trivialise it."

To crystallise or not to

welfare that need to be made. He even praises the British electorate for rising above purely economic preferences in their political choices: "a rather attractive posture by the voters", he calls it.

He certainly does not want to walk away from the opportunity to spend the results of his anti-inflationary labours. Although he praises Norman Lamont and Kenneth Clarke for their courage, he sees the achievement of low inflation as essentially his own, the top item in the ledger of his achievements.

Will he have no option but to walk away? He confesses that he is baffled by the opinion polls. He finds so much "warm support" around the country, but admits that he may be being misled by the innate politeness of the British electorate.

He does not mention Margaret Thatcher in our interview. He evokes her only once, when he is talking about how he feels in this difficult and depressing election campaign for Conservatives. "Yes, I am enjoying myself at the moment," he says. An image comes swooping down to us of Mrs Thatcher, on the day that she announced her resignation as Prime Minister, telling Dennis Skinner how much she too was enjoying herself.

As we leave, Major turns to the troubles of Surrey County Cricket Club, the problems of success in having so many star players, the dangers of failing if they all play for national sides this season rather than their county, his pleasure in Mark Butcher's century for England A. He leans forward to make cover drives across the carpet. The White Drawing Room is a temporary sight-screen as well as a temporary home.



Bring back school cane, say rebel Tory candidates

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT

TEN Tory candidates in Wales last night delivered a short, sharp message to the Prime Minister: bring back the cane. They said that corporal punishment should be restored in schools as a last resort.

The candidates believe that the traditional values held in Welsh farming and valley communities would make the policy a vote

winner. One of them, the Rev Feliz Aabel, a Welsh-speaking Congregational minister and Tory candidate for Ceredigion, west Wales, said his belief in the cane in his election address.

He said last night: "There are strong links with the chapels and Nonconformism in Wales and in these communities traditional values such as good discipline are strong." Dr Aabel, 36, a bachelor

and huntsman, who was caned several times at his school at Rhaydlefelin in Pontypridd, South Wales, said that he believed the cane should be used for serious discipline problems such as theft, assault and insubordination.

The advocates of the cane make up a quarter of Welsh Tory candidates and their stance threatens to revive the row last autumn when Gillian Shephard, the Educa-

tion Secretary, suggested that corporal punishment could be restored if teachers and governors demanded it. Mr Major immediately made clear that this was not the government view.

David Davies, 25, a candidate in Bridgend, said last week that if elected he would bring forward a Private Member's Bill. "The cane should be used sparingly as a deterrent," he said. "I have seen it

working in places like Singapore, where there is a zero crime rate. We should be looking at their regime, not just on how to deal with unruly pupils but also for muggers and other criminals."

Robert Buckland, 28, a barrister fighting the new seat of Preseli Pembrokeshire, said: "We are a humane and compassionate people, but we are not frightened to exert reasonable punishment."

TUESDAY

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TIMES

SEE VOUCHER ON PAGE 2.

OFFER NOT VALID IN REPUBLIC OF IRELAND OR MAINLAND EUROPE

Primary Colors writer turns on Blair's 'faded rhetoric and magisterial vacuity'

'Anonymous' reveals his true feelings



Quentin Letts tells how the American media's disenchantment with the Clinton White House is spilling over on to the Labour Party

TONY BLAIR was riddled by a burst of political friendly fire yesterday. *The New Yorker* magazine, supposedly an admirer, ripped into his "magisterial vacuity", "ostentatious modesty" and his laughable "antic eagerness".

Such was Mr Blair's desire to sell himself to the British electorate, the magazine said, that he resembled "the ultimate sales clerk anxiously peddling toaster ovens".

The words came from Joe Klein, a political writer for the Manhattan weekly. Earlier this month Mr Klein was the sole foreign correspondent granted access to the Blair campaign bus as it toured Britain. The Labour Party's image fixers were serenely confident that the morsom but apparently sympathetic American writer and his British expatriate editor, Tina Brown, would fluff up another of their helpful, pro-Blair souffles.

Instead the article, which appears in this week's issue, is a deft hatchet job posing as an analysis of Mr Blair's "enormous appeal". It concludes that Mr Blair is interested in little more than winning the election, something that "as Bill Clinton has amply demonstrated... does not necessarily count for very much at all".

Mr Klein earned notoriety (and several million dollars) last year as "Anonymous", the author of the quasi-biographical *Primary Colors*, which betrayed the oozing libidinousness and cynicism of Mr Clinton and his cronies. With Mr Blair you must subtract the sex, conceded Mr Klein, but in other respects there are depressing similarities.

He accused the Labour leader of "tiptoeing across the political landscape, taking no chances", but noted: "Avoiding risk can itself be a risk.

It comes just as America's

when politicians talk of vision they mean at best the very short term.

But he went on to paint a world where Labour had become the natural party of government. The Tories had committed *hara-kiri* over Europe and the Liberal Democrats were sitting pretty to become the natural party of opposition. This gazing into

the near distance suited Paddy well.

He had left his daughter's bedside to make the Frost interview because he needed to declare a change in the focus of his party's efforts and the Frost programme is the best place, short of a party election broadcast, for making such an announcement without fear of hostile questioning.

The time had come for one nation conservatives to come across to the Lib Dems, he said. If they are depressed at the prospect of the Tory civil war after the election defeat, then like Emma Nicholson, why not come across now to the Liberals, the party of Disraeli and Macmillan. The message was buried a bit to be sure, and everyone got muddled at one stage, with Ashdown calling Frost

Trying to think a really long way ahead — like a few weeks — confuses politicians so much they forget who they're talking to, writes Nicholas Wapshot

"Peter", and Frost, quick-footed as ever, calling him "Tony" in return, but it is still difficult to see why the bulletin at the end quoted Ashdown as saying the government were rubbish, which was hardly new, and ignored his change of tack.

At lunchtime the BBC laid on an unpromising debate on the economy starring Labour's Margaret Beckett, the Liberals' Malcolm Bruce and the Chancellor and pro-

spective Tory leader Kenneth Clarke. The ding-dong went round in circles, as usual, but the show provided the best parade ring so far for Clarke to show his good teeth, his strong back legs and his punishing kick.

It is not difficult to see why Labour dread Clarke's replacing Major. Beyond the laudably unkempt hair, the good suit hurried over the ample frame and the unfashionable embrace of the European

ideal, here is a true television star.

Unlike the automaton who scrabbles for rote-learned soundbites laid down in spin doctors' manuals, Clarke speaks politics like a human being. He takes time to smile, he relishes a spat, he despises mouthing a written brief and he has an admirable disdain for going off the record. But with the Eurosceptic tide coming in quickly, Clarke is all but written off.

On ITV, Tony Blair was being questioned in the second half of the series of paired programmes in which the Brothers Dimbleby are given the chance to compare their differing talents first on the party leaders and then on the election night results programmes. Once the brothers were so similar they might be thought of as Dimblebium

and Dimblebee, but on *Parade* brother David introduced an unlikely savage edge, grilling Blair in a blackened Mastermind studio.

Brother Jonathan, burdened with a studio audience, charged head first into Europe, the minimum wage and taxes, but Blair remained comfortable throughout.

I have been wondering for some time where I have seen so often the unmistakable trademark visage of eternal grin, jut ears, distract hair and chipped front tooth which has become the Labour leader's face for the nation. And deep in my adolescent memory I have found those grinning features Alfred E Neumann, the mascot of *Mad Magazine*. And since the Tories crashed last week, his motto fits, too: "What, me worry?"



Joe Klein, political writer on *The New Yorker* and a supposed ally of the Blair camp, visits Kidsgrove while on the campaign trail with Labour

new Labour Britain

Two-tier NHS will end, says Smith

By JILL SHERMAN

LABOUR promised yesterday to end "the two-tier system in the health service" by October 1 by preventing patients registered with GP fundholders from jumping waiting lists.

Chris Smith, the Shadow Health Secretary, said a Labour government would be determined to ensure that patients were treated according to need rather than whether their GP was a fundholder. Hospitals would be asked to draw up common waiting lists so that patients of fundholders would take them turn.

The pledge came as Labour disclosed that NHS waiting lists were at an all-time high, with 1.1 million people seeking treatment and announced a five-point programme to tackle the problem. Patients whose operations had been scheduled would not be affected, but those seeing GP fundholders after October 1 would have no guarantee that they will be treated more quickly.

The party is committed to phasing out fundholding, one of the key elements of the Tories' NHS reforms, and introducing a new system of locality commissioning. Fundholders would lose their budgets within two to three years but Mr Smith wants some changes sooner.

In a letter to Alan Langlands, head of the NHS Executive, he says the first step is to halt any further applications to join GP fundholding. "I must insist that we put an end to any element of a two-tier approach as soon as it is practically possible and no later than 1 October 1997."

Mr Smith also proposes appointing a "bureaucracy buster" to generate at least £100 million from administrative savings to treat 100,000 more patients. He said yesterday: "I want fewer people in the NHS pushing bits of paper around. I want more people on wards treating patients."

First-time voters favour Labour

MORE than half of five million first-time voters support Labour, according to a poll published yesterday.

In the nationwide MORI poll of voters aged between 18 and 23 for *Thatcher's Children*, to be shown on Channel 4 on Thursday, 56 per cent said they would vote Labour. The Tories were supported by 23 per cent and the Liberal Democrats by 11 per cent.

The Green Party, Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru received 4 per cent each. Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party attracted support from 2 per cent.

Asked who would make the best prime minister, John Major scored 22 per cent, Tony Blair 43 per cent and Paddy Ashdown 8 per cent.

The most important issue for 65 per cent was education; 54 per cent wanted more jobs and 50 per cent better health care. More than 30 per cent said that training was important to them.

□ MORI interviewed 539 adults at 41 constituency points between March 24 and April 5.

Confusion as Tony Ashdown gets grilled by Peter Frost

And suddenly, it seemed, everyone was talking about life after the election. Paddy Ashdown started it on *Breakfast with Frost* when asked how the world would look in 18 years' time to Paddy's new half-French grandson Mathieu, born last week.

"We're only used to looking four years ahead at a time," said Ashdown, showing that

when politicians talk of vision they mean at best the very short term.

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Broadcast invokes Elgar to undermine the Tories

By JILL SHERMAN

LABOUR tonight uses *Land of Hope and Glory* in its party election broadcast, which warns voters of the dangers of a fifth Conservative term. The patriotic song, which the Conservatives have often used as a theme tune, is used in ironic counterpoint to images of the ills of Tory Britain.

Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* march No. 1 runs throughout the party broadcast, which begins with pictures from last year's Tory party conference of the jingoistic waving of Union Jacks and grinning Cabinet ministers. The film is intercut with pictures of patients on trolleys in hospital corridors; elderly residents in a nursing home; vandalism and juvenile crime; and packed classrooms.

Across the images are stark written messages: "50,000

fewer nurses... The Tories are pulling the NHS apart. The Tories will sell off old people's homes... Crime has doubled under the Tories." The broadcast declares that if the Tories are re-elected they will do as they please. "No one could stop them."

The camera cuts to the Brighton Conference Centre and then a sandcastle on the

failing its people — in direct contrast to the theme music."

Yesterday it emerged that Labour has decided to switch its colours from traditional red to "passionate purple" for the last week of the general election campaign. Purple is to be the dominant colour on posters to be unveiled this Thursday. The party will hoist purple balloons, give out purple leaflets, appear against purple backdrops and wear purple hats.

Peter Mandelson, the party's campaign manager, says that purple illustrates the party's passion to improve the health service and education and to combat crime.

Purple is probably more often associated with Roman emperors, popes, and pretenders, not to mention 1970s loon pants and maxi-skirts.

Party sources insist that purple is not going to replace red, but will "compete with it". There will be red on purple and purple on red, each vying for centre stage.

But traditionalists may be alarmed at what they see as another departure from the party's old values. Red has been the international symbol of the Left since the 19th century, and Labour's colour since the party was set up.

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The

Disciplined old hand McGahey promises Red Dawn for the Scots



Michael Gove reports on familiar scenes as the Scottish TUC celebrates its centenary in Glasgow among old friends and new comrades

THERE can seldom have been clearer evidence of the control that old party hands are capable of than the speech to the Scottish TUC's centenary congress given yesterday by Mick McGahey.

A lifetime in the Communist Party teaches you many things, but above all it inculcates discipline. This was a study in socialist self-control of which Vladimir Ilyich would have been proud.

Mr McGahey, a former leader of Scotland's miners and a lifelong Communist, enjoys a distinguished but cramped position in the trade union movement, just to the left of Arthur Scargill.

For new Labour strategists still reeling from a firemen's strike in Essex it would have been hard to conceive of a less attractive photo-opportunity than Mr McGahey addressing hundreds of eccentrically bereted and extravagantly tattooed shop stewards promising Red Dawn on May 2.

They need not have worried in Millbank Tower. Certainly, Mr McGahey tantalised an audience whose every instinct is old Labour. He attacked the "hysteria of certain forces" which had sought to place the

STUC in an unflattering light. The brothers were not sure for a second whether it was Ian Lang's or David Blunkett's disobliging comments that had provoked the reaction. Mr McGahey also promised, to tumultuous applause, to "defend the welfare state" beginning the question who would be doing the attacking.

But, after the glimpses of the cloven hoof behind the lectern, Mr McGahey went back to his message. A side swipe at the sneaky Tories — nothing but "political troglodytes" — was followed by a line that will have brought Peter Mandelson to his feet applauding along with the pony-tailed activists. Mr McGahey, with a hint of a smile, exclaimed:

"They say we are looking for a pay-off. Well, I'll settle for no favours but fairness."

They say the devil can quote Scripture for his own purposes, but it still gives pause for thought when Scotland's greatest living Marxist approvingly appropriates a Blairite soundbite.

Mr McGahey, determined to do nothing to imperil a Labour victory, had showed the sort of discipline that made the Communist Party the vanguard of struggle on Scotland's shop floors. A moderate demeanour is the radical's best weapon.

The former miners' leader's performance is far from the only evidence of the STUC's radical roots at this congress. The stalls seemed to have been designed by a Saatchi set designer. From Unity Books, "Scotland's left and progressive bookshop" primarily displaying Engels' *Condition of the English Working Class*, to those offering Che T-shirts, miners' lamps and heroic accounts of the struggle in Cuba, there could not have been a more effective reminder of old Labour's loves.

At one stall, two women



The struggle old and new: Mick McGahey preaching to the Scottish TUC yesterday, left, and addressing its southern sister in Brighton in 1984



Unrepentant Bickerstaffe insists on setting rate for a minimum wage

Philip Bassett reports on Unison's discord with softer Labour line

BRITAIN'S biggest union will today risk provoking Labour anger and fresh Conservative attacks on trade unionism by setting a level for a national minimum wage. The call at the Scottish Trades Union Congress by Rodney Bickerstaffe, of the public services union Unison, will be the first time in the election campaign that a major trade union has spoken out.

Unison, Labour's largest affiliated union, has decided to promote its long-standing policy of a minimum wage set at 50 per cent of male median earnings, even though they know Conservative strategists will exploit it. Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, attacked the congress proposals, including the minimum wage, as "a litany of left-wing demands which, if agreed to, would ruin Britain".

David Blunkett, Shadow Employment and Education Secretary, said that the congress should abandon hopes of influencing a Labour government unless its policies "totally matched" those of Labour. Campbell Christie, the congress general secretary, said yesterday as its conference began that it "obviously regrets any potential government minister indicating that they are not prepared to listen to various points of view before forming policy decisions". John Monks, the TUC leader, made clear that it will continue to push for key union claims, including rights for part-time workers.

Conservatives will also seize on a strong reception at the Glasgow congress yesterday for Ken Cameron, the Fire Brigades Union leader, ahead of a planned second strike today by firefighters in Essex. Mr Cameron urged fresh talks to end the dispute and called on a new Labour government to start building a new way of handling the public sector after May 1.

IN BRIEF

Sinn Fein 'pledged to peace'

Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein leader, looked forward yesterday to the election of a new government to help to reconstruct the Northern Ireland peace process. He said that the new government should face up to Sinn Fein, each on its own terms, and put behind it the failures of the past.

Mr Adams, speaking at the party's annual conference, said: "A lasting peace is the prize. The Westminster elections on May 1 are a watershed moment in our history that must be seized. We must send a clear message to the new London government.

"Today I pledge Sinn Fein's commitment to peace and to negotiations and to agreement."

Self confessed

Writer Will Self, sacked by *The Observer* last week, admitted he did snort heroin aboard John Major's campaign jet. He told the *Independent on Sunday*: "So I was smacked out on the Prime Minister's jet — big deal." He insisted he did not behave oddly, and had filed 1,500 words for *The Observer* on time.

ELECTION TRAIL

Conservative: Kenneth Baker, Peter Lilley in South, Stephen Dorrell in North West, Gillian Shephard in North; Lord Archer in North East, Michael Portillo in West; Michael Howard in London. **Labour:** Margaret Beckett in Wales, Donald Dewar in Scotland, Frank Dobson in North East, Clare Short, Michael Meacher in North West, Harriet Harman in Midlands, Chris Smith in North, Jack Straw in the East, Lib Dems Paddy Ashdown in Cornwall, Shirley Williams in South East, Lord Rodgers in East. **On screen:** BBC 1 Paddy Ashdown interview, *Panorama* 8.30pm. BBC2 Kenneth Clarke interviewed live on *Newshight*, 10.30pm.

Major promises parents power to create more grammar schools

THE TORY CAMPAIGN

JOHN MAJOR will today present his proposals to create a grammar school in every town by allowing parents to petition governors to make their schools fully selective. Jill Sherman writes.

The Prime Minister will also announce plans to let school boards of governors appeal directly to the Secretary of State for grammar-school status, rather than having to apply via the local education authority as they do now.

Mr Major hopes that the fast track to the education secretary would encourage more schools to consider opting for full selection. The Tories see selection as a vote-winner and it will also give them an opportunity to repeal the charge of "hypocrisy" against Shadow Education Secretary Harriet Harman for choosing a selective school for her children.

Parents could initiate the application for the new status by petitioning the board of governors, but just a small group could trigger this request. Once a school has asked to be fully selective, the governors would have to show "a broad consensus of support" from parents.

But sources said there would be no requirement for a formal ballot of the parents or for evidence that more than 50 per cent of the parents supported the move. "Of course if there is a huge body of opposition the Secretary of State probably would not grant the application."

Mr Major and Gillian Sheppard, the Secretary of State for Education, will also confirm that if the Conservatives win a fifth term, this would allow them to renew their policy to permit grant-maintained schools to select 50 per cent of their pupils, specialist schools to select

30 per cent and other schools to select up to 20 per cent. This push for increased selection had to be dropped from the Education Bill last month after Labour and Liberal Democrat opposition.

But some Tory radicals are known to be disappointed that the Government is proposing no incentives for schools to become selective, like those which encouraged schools to opt out of local authority control. They fear that without a cash boost the dream of a grammar school in every town will come to nothing.

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Tory manifesto plans would make all schools independent legal entities with charitable status and control over their own admissions policies. That would give them power to submit plans for 100 per cent selection without reference to their education authority.

The new mechanisms mir-

Eurosceptic tycoon takes his campaign to unions

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

MORE than 80 per cent of Conservative candidates in seats currently held by the party have taken up the financial inducement offered by a Yorkshire businessman to come out against the single currency in their election addresses, it emerged yesterday.

Paul Sykes, the millionaire who sparked the revolt against John Major's options-open policy, will step up his one-man crusade this week by taking his campaign to trade unions and small business.

He has spent more than £500,000 and is prepared to sink well over £1 million into his battle. Mr Sykes said yesterday that some 230 candidates in Tory-held seats had taken up his offer and were receiving sums of up to £3,000 to help their re-election campaign. With ministers obviously debarred from availing themselves of the offer, it

appears that only about 25 candidates in seats currently held by the Conservatives have not said they are against the single currency.

Now the 53-year-old businessman, who owns 40 per cent of the giant Meadowhall shopping centre near Sheffield, has decided to employ the services of a leading polling organisation to gauge true feelings about the single currency in unions and among the workers in small firms. He intends to take out advertisements in the national newspapers from next weekend to publish the results.

He is convinced that just as his campaign at the Tory grassroots has shown the extent of Conservative opposition to the single currency, the polling exercise will show the worries of British workers about abolishing the pound.

He said: "I am doing this to help the Conservative Party



Sykes: funding for election campaigns

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Netanyahu escapes charges but fights for political life

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ALTHOUGH a legal report rejected for lack of evidence a police recommendation that fraud and breach of trust charges be brought against him, Binyamin Netanyahu, the right-wing Israeli Prime Minister, last night launched a fight for his political survival.

Publication of the report plunged Israel into a new stage of a crisis that will not be resolved until junior coalition partners have met to decide if they will continue to back his Government, which has 66 seats in the 120-member Knesset.

In spite of the short breathing space given to Mr Netanyahu by the report, presented by Elyakim Rubinstein, the Attorney-General, and Edna Arbel, the State Attorney, commentators believe the political crisis is far from over.

According to the report, which took six days to prepare and was rushed out in advance of the Passover holiday starting today, the top law officers have ruled that, subject to his immunity as a member of the Knesset being lifted, charges of fraud, obstruction of justice and extortion should be brought against Aryeh Deri, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party.

which controls ten of the coalition's seats. Leading members of the party have already threatened a "political earthquake" if Mr Deri is charged.

At a tense news conference, Mr Rubinstein said no decision had yet been made about police recommendations that charges of breach of trust be brought against Avigdor Lieberman, the director-general of the Prime Minister's office and one of Mr Netanyahu's closest confidantes.

The report ruled that the police recommendation of charges against Tzachi Hargbi, the Justice Minister, should not be acted on, also because of lack of evidence. The Attorney-General said there were "grounds for bewilderment" about Mr Netanyahu's part in the appointment of Roni Bar-On, a Jerusalem criminal lawyer, as Attorney-General.

The scandal began in January when Israeli television claimed that his short-lived appointment — he resigned within hours — had been made because of a deal whereby Mr Deri, already facing corruption charges elsewhere, would be granted a plea bargain by Mr Bar-On. In exchange he was alleged to have offered to persuade his

Treasures of the tsar rekindle Cold War

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

IN WHAT might be called a cultural cold war, treasures of the tsars were yesterday stuck for a fifth day in a removal van being blockaded by Russian embassy cars on a Washington street.

The Russians say the dispute is over where next to show the treasures, valued at \$100 million (£61.5 million). The Americans say it is about money.

A dazzling array of more than 115 imperial jewels, including an egg-sized stone known as Caesar's Ruby, a 250-carat sapphire and one of the world's largest cut diamonds, was locked in the vaults of the Corcoran Gallery at the end of a ten-week exhibition that drew 80,000 visitors.

Some exhibits — gowns worn by Catherine the Great, plus two dozen boxes of icons, artefacts and portraits from the Romanov court — were already loaded into the removal van outside, just down the street from the White House. It cannot move, because cars parked fore and aft and manned around the clock by Russian diplomats have it boxed in.

The exhibition was arranged by the American Russian Cultural Co-operation Foundation, a Washington non-profit group, in collaboration with the Russian Organising Committee, an off-



A Russian Embassy car hemmed in a removal truck in New York to stop it leaving with part of an exhibition of tsarist treasures, including a bracelet containing a flat diamond, top, and diamond and sapphire earrings

shoot of the Russian Ministry of Culture.

Last week, the Russians sprang a surprise. They wanted their treasures back at once, instead of them going as planned to Houston and then

on a two-year American tour. They were needed to mark Moscow's 850th anniversary, they said, adding that the cultural foundation had broken a promise to sign a

contract giving them more say over the exhibition, its security and its travels.

On the contrary, said James Symington, chairman of the foundation, the Americans already had a contract giving them control. Peter Marzio, director of the Houston museum, where the treasures are due next, added a rider. Every time he asked the Russians what they wanted, he said, "they start slipping into money".

Sleaze inquiry tests iron will of woman prosecutor

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER



Arbel: has won praise for tough approach

THE future of Israel's right-wing Government has rested in the hands of Edna Arbel, described by *The Jerusalem Report* magazine as the most powerful woman in Israel.

Aged 53 and the mother of three daughters, Mrs Arbel was responsible, with Elyakim Rubinstein, the Attorney-General, for the report published last night on which the fate of Binyamin Netanyahu's Government may depend. His administration has been rocked by the scandal surround-

ing the short-lived appointment of a previous Attorney-General, Roni Bar-On, an obscure Jerusalem criminal lawyer.

As Israel's State Attorney, or chief prosecutor, Mrs Arbel is having her legendary toughness put to the test in the worst sleaze scandal to hit a state that has seen its fair share. Since last week's deliberate leak of police recommendations calling for the prosecution of the Prime Minister on fraud and breach of trust charges, she has come under pressure that many in the legal world would have found impossible to

resist. Writing shortly before the report was made public, Peter Hirschberg, a journalist, concluded: "If she decides not to prosecute, she knows she might well be allowing the establishment of weak political norms. If she does press charges — especially in a case where the law is unclear — she knows her office will be up against the country's finest private lawyers and that at stake is nothing less than the public's faith in the legal system. Acquittals could make future prosecution of public figures much more difficult."

Even before publication of a decision

she termed "hard and certainly not simple", Mrs Arbel — born in Haifa when it was part of British-mandated Palestine — had shown her legal mettle in a style that has convinced many she was the right person for a job she took on reluctantly 14 months ago.

Last November she indicted the Justice Minister, Yaakov Neeman, for giving false testimony to the Supreme Court. Two months earlier she had brought charges against Ehud Olmert, the high-profile right-wing Mayor of Jerusalem, for his alleged role in a late 1980s Likud party funding scandal.

Zaire rebels threaten to open fresh front

BY SAM KILEY
AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, told a rally of 10,000 supporters in Lubumbashi on Saturday that the capture of Kinshasa "won't take long ... we'll be in Kinshasa very soon. We're only 200 kilometres (120 miles) away".

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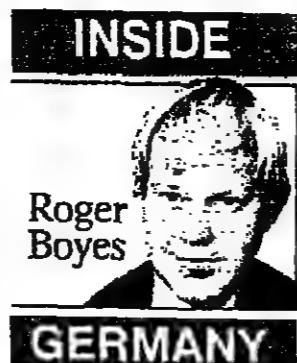
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Bonn padlocks the biscuit tin in cost-cutting retreat to Fortress Europe

The German Foreign Ministry recently circulated a memorandum insisting that its diplomats pay for coffee and biscuits served to guests. Visitors to the ministry, even big-time officials with a view of the Rhine, must either tank up beforehand or gamble on the personal generosity of their hosts. Budgets are shrinking, as is Germany's global reach.

For more than 40 years, Germany's foreign policy appeared cash-driven. The label of economic giant and political dwarf — misleading, as after Suez Germany was a political middleweight gobbling steroids — allowed



INSIDE

Roger
Boyes
GERMANY

Bonn to build up worldwide clout without attracting hostile motives. Bonn became the most influential Western aid donor after Washington's

grants and credit guarantees, its eager trade missions, its championing of the poor and the obscure edged out financially hobbled former colonial powers. This international dimension of German power started to crumble after unification.

Official development aid slumped by more than a quarter between 1990 and 1995. Germany is now in full retreat from its slightly artificial world role. Attempts to secure a permanent United Nations Security Council seat merely cover the tracks: Bonn has lost much of its interest in the world outside the main power centres. Instead Ger-

many is intent on defining itself as the pivotal European state. The aid budget has shrivelled, not only because of German unity bills and the spending cuts needed to qualify for economic and monetary union. Money and energy have been channelled into reconstructing traditional German markets in Central and Eastern Europe.

Between 1990 and 1995 Germany allocated just over DM10 billion (£3.6 billion) to development aid. In the same period, DM189 billion went to Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Significantly, Carl-Dieter Spranger, the Minister for Economic

Co-operation and Development, attracts notice when he visits Ukraine but not Uganda. His contributions to the public debate about mass emigration from Eastern Europe to Germany are carefully noted, but his statements about Zaire's refugee problem are not.

The shift of emphasis is quite understandable, yet unsettling. The do-gooding Federal Republic with its solid liberal consensus, with the will (and cash) to help, is giving way to a hard-nosed state that watches the coffee budget and focuses more and more on narrow self-interest.

Germany is still trying to work out a national interest — a team of political scientists under Michael Stürmer is brooding on the subject — and the murky discipline of geopolitics (abused by Hitler and his quest for *Lebensraum*) is back in vogue. The priority is plain: to make a united Europe into a regional superpower capable of guaranteeing Germany's long-term security and prosperity.

That may make Britain uneasy but there is no doubt that Germany is acting rationally and not out of some amavistic desire to rekindle the Third Reich. The first casualties of this new self-confi-

dence are in the developing world. Eighteen months ago, Helmut Kohl visited South Africa and promised to open markets for his "true friend" Nelson Mandela. Since then Europe has been particularly parsimonious in free-trade negotiations. Some markets will be opened up for Johannesburg but in return South Africans are expected to cut tariffs dramatically.

Germany submitted a list of 90 South African products it wanted excluded from any liberalisation. Bonn is agitating against South African fruit and flowers. Just as it lobbies against South American beef. It is time for Britain to rethink some of its assumptions about Germany. Britain considered Bonn an ally on free-trade issues.

Yet it acts, increasingly, as a protectionist government. What kind of Europe is Germany cobbining together? As jobs melt away in France and Germany, so pressure increases to shield threatened domestic communities.

In this timid world, everything from Polish coal to South African apples is seen as a menace to prosperity and social stability. Europe, in meshing more closely, is also turning inwards, a sense of siege replacing the big visionary phrases of yesteryear.

Kohl faces tax rises and welfare cuts to meet euro date

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE German Government will soon have to announce drastic measures to boost revenue, including a rise in VAT and in petrol tax, to stand a chance of meeting the Maastricht treaty criteria for entry into economic and monetary union.

That was the assessment yesterday of leading politicians after a leak of the spring forecast of Germany's six top economic institutes which calculates Bonn will significantly overshoot the EMU target and public spending targets.

Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister, is under pressure to tell the parliamentary budget committee on Wednesday precisely how Bonn intends to keep on track for the euro — and come clean about planned tax increases.

The German political calendar is now almost entirely dictated by EMU. On May 15 the official prediction of Germany's likely tax revenue for this year will be announced, defining exactly how much more has to be saved. By July 1 — if the opposition Social Democrats agree — the Government is expected to propose an increase in VAT by 1 per cent to reach 16 per cent, and push petrol tax up from 6 to 10 per cent. But even those steps

may not be sufficient to avoid yet more cuts in social welfare spending.

Klaus Kinkel, the Foreign Minister, told the Hessische Rundfunk radio station yesterday that the single currency would start on time. "We [Germany] will meet the criteria and, in particular, the criteria for public debt," he added, saying: "The timetable will be met."

The six institutes, which present their forecast tomorrow, are expected to announce that Germany will have a public sector deficit of 3.2 per cent of gross domestic product this year, compared to the 3 per cent ceiling set by Maastricht. The forecasters reckon on average unemployment this year of 4.3 million. Government figures had previously estimated an average of 4.1 million, which would have just kept Bonn on course for the euro.

"Now it's getting really serious," said Norbert Weizsäcker, the Social Democratic chairman of the parliamentary budget committee. "We expect Waigel to set out the facts as they really are, unadorned and without waffle."

He said that he shared the view of government politicians that it would be almost impossible to achieve German participation in EMU on the basis of 1997 results. There was no longer any way around yet more public borrowing; all savings possibilities had been exhausted, the Social Democrat said.

Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, has repeatedly stated that he will not increase VAT this year but it seems plain that he will have to backtrack. But such tax increases would trigger political clashes and may tear apart the coalition Government.

Herr Kohl's junior partner, the Free Democrats, are also against such tax rises.

Hermin Otto Solms, the party chairman, said: "It can only damage the common European currency." Herr Kohl's other partner in government, the Bavarian Christian Social Union, is opposing a rise in petrol tax in part because Bavaria is the hub of much of the German car industry.

"Increasing VAT could improve our competitiveness and make labour cheaper," Edmund Stoiber, the Bavarian Prime Minister, said. He argued that part of the revenue from an increase in VAT could be used to reduce social contributions and encourage employers to take on more staff.

LEKA ZOG, pretender to the Albanian throne, yesterday made his first journey inside the country, greeting tens of thousands of supporters in the family homeland of Mat.

A royal cortege of five black Mercedes, chrome bumpers gleaming, left Tirana in the morning, accompanied by a motley assortment of bodyguards. Albanian police and well-wishers. By the time it arrived three hours later in Burrel, the main town of Mat district, there were at least 50 vehicles in the motorcade, and this had again doubled as Leka Zog approached Burgajet, birthplace in 1895 of his father, King Zog.

Zog family loyalists living along the route gave Leka Zog an enthusiastic welcome in the best Albanian tradition, blasting weapons of any description in the air. At the first stopping point, the holy spring of Vabline Mat, Leka Zog, who until last week had lived all but two days of his 58 years in exile, was moved by his reception. "It's amazing, great to be out here in this wonderful land," he said. "Back in my father's time we could always raise about 2,000 rifles — we'd get about ten times that number now."

The fierce clan loyalties of Mat district helped Zog proclaim himself King in 1928, and there was every indica-

JERRY LAMPEN/REUTERS

Albanians acclaim returning pretender

FROM TOM WALKER
IN BURGAJET

Leka Zog is mobbed yesterday as he visits Burgajet, the birthplace of his father

tion yesterday they could become a strong card for his son as he seeks to build a power base amid the political chaos.

Throughout Leka Zog cut an extraordinary figure at 6ft 8in he towers head and shoulders above most Albanians, and there was every indica-

tion yesterday they could become a strong card for his son as he seeks to build a power base amid the political chaos.

lead Mercedes — ironically, previously used by Enver Hoxha, the Communist despot — was a task in itself.

In Burgajet thousands stampeded up the steep hill sides to catch their first glimpse of Leka Zog, swarming like ants in a stunning

wast panorama encompassing the snow-capped central highlands. "I am among my brothers and sisters," he said. "We must work for peace and unity, to build a future for the coming generations."

Leading article, page 23

Bulgarians elect Right to oversee austerity

FROM JAMES PITTIFER
IN SOFIA

BULGARIANS gave the centre-right Union of Democratic Forces victory in yesterday's poll, about 52 per cent backing President Stoyanov's party.

It was less than an overwhelming triumph, with a turnout of only 62 per cent. The former Communists, the Socialist Party, avoided total humiliation with 23 per cent of the vote. The Monarchists were third, their surprisingly high 8 per cent reflecting the success of the deposed King Simeon's recent visits.

"It was a good victory, but not a great one," a foreign diplomat commented. The Right did well in Sofia, with its developed business culture, and in Black Sea cities such as Varna, while the Socialists are still the major party in old strongholds such as Vidin on the Danube.

Winning the election will have been the easy part for the UDF; appallingly difficult economic decisions lie ahead. An emergency programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank has saved the currency from collapse, but Bulgaria remains in intensive care.

An austerity programme will mean severe hardship: about 20 per cent of the population already live below the poverty line.

Fire adds to havoc in flooded Dakota town

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

FLAMES destroyed three buildings in the centre of Grand Forks and the North Dakota town's fire brigade could only watch — cut off by floodwater. All nearby streets had disappeared under the Red River, swollen by melting snows.

Attempts were made, with limited success, to extinguish the fires from the

air. Many of the 50,000 citizens were forced to abandon Grand Forks when the Red River burst through various levees and sandbag dykes built last week by volunteers. Across the river, in East Grand Forks, muddy water swirled after breaching an inadequate barrier.

Some residents had to be rescued by helicopter, and were being offered accommodation at makeshift shelters or in the homes of those living on higher ground.

Photograph, page 26

Final trip in space for Leary ashes

BY QUENTIN LETTS

THE late American drop-out guru and drug fiend, Timothy Leary — or what remains of him — should today zoom far higher than even he achieved in his halucinogen-smudged lifetime. Some of his ashes will be dispatched into space in what is being described as the first "space funeral".

Leary, together with Gene Rodenberry, creator of Star Trek, was one of 24 eccentrics whose ashes will be included in tiny capsules attached to a Spanish satellite launch over the Canary Islands.

The space-bound satellite and celestial urn will be carried to 36,000ft on a Lockheed L1011 aircraft before its rocket detaches and is ignited. The Minisat rocket should then blast out of Earth's atmosphere, taking Leary, Rodenberry et al with it.

Friends of Leary, who died after a long illness last year, hope that the stunt will give the old iconoclast's soul "one last far-out trip". He heard about the \$4,800 (£2,900) space funeral shortly before his death. Carol Rosin, an acquaintance, said: "He was so excited that he would finally go into space that he jumped up and down in his wheelchair. I know that is the moment that he decided it was time to die."

The ashes of the "space pioneers" are in capsules the size of a lipstick. After floating in orbit for about ten years they are expected to re-enter Earth's atmosphere, burning up in a flash of light.

Celestis, the Texas-based enterprise organising the space funeral, hopes to repeat the exercise for others, making perhaps three launches a year.

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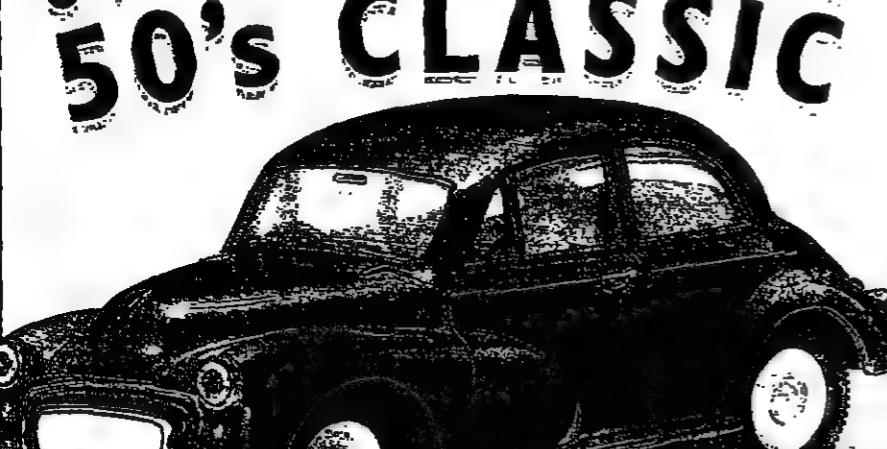


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Scientists who can never forget a face

Anjana Ahuja
on how our unique looks can be quantified

With only a few strokes of a pen, a caricaturist is able to sketch a human likeness. Among thousands of heads at a pop concert, we are able to discern friends from strangers.

Without knowing it, both artist and connoisseur are analysing "ridge curves". These are regions on the face showing extreme curvature — the contours of the nose, the rise of the cheeks and the curl of the chin. These distinctive curves, and their proportions to each other, are used intuitively by the brain to match them to individuals.

Now, in a collaborative project funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, statisticians at Leeds University and medical physicists at University College, London, are putting numbers to these curves, in an attempt to find a way to map the human face.

The research, led by Professor Kanti Mardia and Professor John Kent at Leeds, and Dr Alf Linney at University College, has two major applications. First, the face maps are being used by plastic surgeons to reconstruct faces, and to measure the effectiveness of treatments for facial deformities. Second, transforming a face into a series of numbers is equivalent to giving it a digital signature, which could soon be employed in the identification of criminals.

The researchers are seeking a mathematical method of encoding faces that is both quick and simple, and reliable enough to be accepted in courts of law.

An example of a facial deformity is hemifacial microsomia, where one side of the face develops faster than the other. The face gradually begins to look lopsided, especially the chin. This unevenness can appear from the age of five.

There are conflicting views about the best way of correcting this distressing congenital condition, which affects three out of a thousand people. Some doctors administer drugs to accelerate growth on the slow side. Others advocate surgery. Another method is to use appliances to train the face to grow in a certain way.

"There was no quantitative evaluation of which method was working," Dr Linney



Digital technology can record distinctive facial curves so that doctors can help patients to recover their looks

power chook

says. "It was like trying to measure something without a ruler. Now, we can use the face maps to track the long-term effect of the treatments."

The maps are produced by scanning the patient's face with a laser, which produces tens of thousands of numbers, or co-ordinates. The co-ordinates are grouped into small clusters, and smoothed by taking statistical averages of the numbers in each portion. Then the average curva-

ture of each part of the face can be calculated. By repeating this before and after surgery, any differences in face shape can be recorded.

The maps have also been used to plan plastic surgery. For example, with hemifacial microsomia patients, a surgeon can use a map of the "normal side" to help to restore symmetry, removing the trial-and-error factor. The charts have also helped surgeons to perform operations previously regarded as too risky. The unpredictability arises because soft tissues move around after surgery, and, for younger patients, operations might affect how the face will grow and develop. Now the surgery can be simulated on computer first.

The researchers have joined the Police Foundation, and Forensic Technology, a Scottish company, to try to establish a formula that can allow a face to be identified. They are making progress and recently published a paper in the *Journal of Applied Statistics*, outlining the problems associated with "facial fingerprint" system.

They took photographs of 360 white males, and looked at 11 different measurements of facial features. The idea was to discover measurements with the widest variation in the general population.

Professor Mardia says: "A pattern of landmarks, with points representing the eyes, nostrils, ears and mouth corners, is another method of differentiating between people. But more research is needed to uncover precisely which of the components of a face are unique to individuals."

Initially, the researchers are aiming for a measurement system which gives no more than four matches for every thousand faces. They are aware that their eventual technique must be virtually foolproof. Just one doubt is enough to wreck a court case, which is why the statistical work by Leeds is so crucial. Consequently, eyewitness accounts are increasingly dismissed as unreliable.

In response to this, courts are relying more and more on evidence from video cameras. But video surveillance has its

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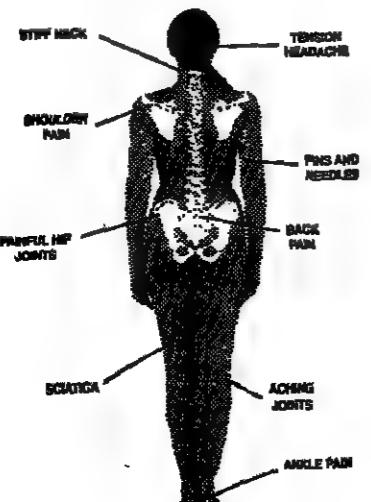
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Dental defects □ Roost boost □ Tracing tots

Roots of disease

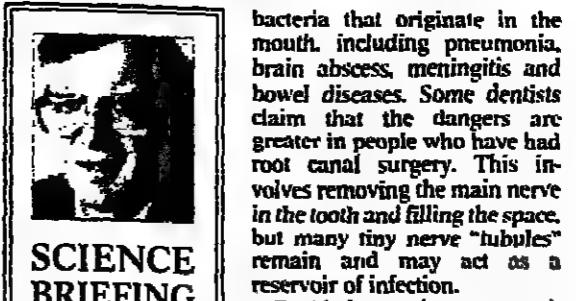
MANY people take their teeth for granted, neglecting regular dental appointments. Perhaps they should think again. Evidence is mounting that diseases of the mouth can greatly increase the risk of other afflictions, such as heart disease.

In America, Professor Robert Genco, of the University of Buffalo in New York State, reports that in a population of native Americans in Arizona, gum disease was a stronger predictor of future heart disease than any of the conventional risk factors such as high blood pressure, high levels of cholesterol, age or gender.

"We have always suspected that periodontal disease was a true risk factor for cardiovascular disease, but our studies have been confounded by the presence of smoking," Professor Genco says. "Smoking is rare in this community of Pima Indians, so it was not a factor. We found a powerful association between the existence of periodontal disease at the beginning of the study and the development of cardiovascular disease in the succeeding ten years."

Dr Haroun Shah, of Eastman Dental Institute at the University of London, finds these results interesting. "Earlier studies have shown that women with gum disease tend to have underweight babies," he says. Last year he organised a conference at the institute on the contributions that infections of the mouth may have to general health.

At the conference, Dr Sydney Finegold, of the University of California at Los Angeles, said that many infections may involve



**SCIENCE
BRIEFING**

Nigel Hawkes

bacteria that originate in the mouth, including pneumonia, brain abscess, meningitis and bowel diseases. Some dentists claim that the dangers are greater in people who have had root canal surgery. This involves removing the main nerve in the tooth and filling the space, but many tiny nerve "tubules" remain and may act as a reservoir of infection.

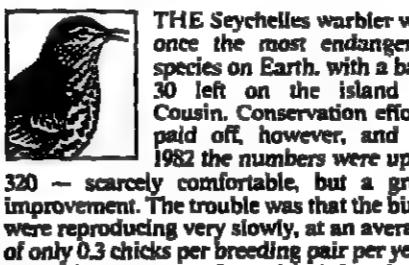
Dr Shah says he was sceptical initially, but now thinks the theory has to be taken seriously.

Although the immune system cannot get rid of bacteria living in the root canal, healthy people can prevent them invading the rest of the body, but the elderly or those with lowered immune function may not be able to do so.

A few years ago it would not have been possible to demonstrate any link between infections in the mouth and in the rest of the body. But with the advent of DNA fingerprinting techniques it is now possible to follow the movement of a single infective agent throughout the body," he says.

Professor Genco blames bacteria for the link between gum and heart disease in the Pima Indians. "They enter the bloodstream via small ulcers in the gum tissue," he says. "These bacteria cause platelets in the blood to aggregate and form clumps. These clumps accumulate on damaged tissue, such as lesions in the blood vessel or a heart valve replacement. The accumulated clumps can block a blood vessel. There are many reasons to treat gum disease. This is a very good one."

Warblers now have a supper to sing for



THE Seychelles warbler was once the most endangered species on Earth, with a bare 30 left on the island of Cousin. Conservation efforts paid off, however, and by 1982 the numbers were up to 320 — scarcely comfortable, but a great improvement. The trouble was that the birds were reproducing very slowly, at an average of only 0.3 chicks per breeding pair per year.

Dutch researchers from the University of Groningen suspected that the cause was genetic impoverishment. The species had so nearly wiped out that its genetic base was narrow, and inbreeding had caused a loss of fertility. To test this, they studied a group of 29 birds which had been released in 1988 on the neighbouring island of Aride.

They found the birds to be flourishing. In spite of inbreeding, they are vigorous little birds that raise chicks in plenty throughout the year. The conclusion is that genetic impoverishment had nothing to do with the problem, which was caused entirely by a scarcity of food on Cousin. Given a decent diet, the birds warble with the best of them.

Children's prints just drift away



WHEN children commit crimes, they are much less likely to leave behind incriminating fingerprints, according to an American chemist. The reason, says Dr Michelle Buchanan, of the US National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, is that children's fingerprints evaporate quickly from warm surfaces because they contain many volatile fatty acids.

After puberty, the glands in the skin begin to secrete heavier, less volatile alkyd esters that linger longer. Dr Buchanan was called in after police failed to find the fingerprints of a kidnapped three-year-old despite accounts by witnesses that placed her in the house they had searched.

Her study, presented last week at the annual meeting of the American Chemical Society, showed that fingerprint tests reveal far more than whorls and ridges. They also reveal cholesterol, nicotine and hormone levels. "Maybe down the road police will be able to say 'this print was made by a male who smokes and has high cholesterol,'" says Stephen Jarboe, a team member.

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Hitched: Patsy Kensit and Liam Gallagher

Marriage: why it's hip to get hitched

Suddenly, it's no longer cool to co-habit. Commitment is the real rebellion. Opposite, Joe Joseph investigates the marriage phenomenon, while below Barry Turner and Tania Kindersley describe their own experience



Hitched: Rebecca Miller and Daniel Day-Lewis

CHRIS HARRIS

We're saying thanks for the wonderful years

MARRIAGE AT 60

Don't do it," said the lady novelist when I let slip that I was planning to marry for the third time. It was one of those suffocatingly crowded parties where nose-to-nose conversations make for uninvited intimacies.

"Why ever not?" "Well, for one thing," she said. "you're too old."

"Too old? At 60? Come on. I am known to turn in a good day's work. I can still get across the road without help. As for sex, I defer to Groucho Marx. Marrying a girl a third his age, it was suggested that sex might be dangerous. 'Well,' said Groucho, 'if she dies, she dies.'

Not that our age difference is that great. It can be a bit unnerving when I reflect that Mary was born the year I started my military service. But she has now topped 40, a woman of independent mind and successful career. It can hardly be said that I am leading her astray.

And, I love her, dammit. There, I've said it. The cloak of English reserve having been cast aside, I can now reveal that we have lived together for some time. We know each other's little habits and tolerate them, even if I do scream silently when I am told to turn left when she really means straight on. And I have been known to utter abuse when, for the umpteenth time, I have fallen over a pair of shoes left carelessly in the middle of the bedroom floor.

Of my own irritating characteristics, or at least those I am prepared to recognise, a slight deafness can lead to harsh words. The latest confusion was when Mary told me

that Shropshire was too far, which puzzled me because I had no immediate intention of going to Shropshire. In fact she had said, or said she had said, that the shopping was in the car. But, as I say, we have learnt to live with our foibles.

So why change anything? Why make formal an accommodation that has worked satisfactorily thus far?

The answer is that the



Barry Turner and Mary Fulton: "Having lived with her for more than a decade, I know that I am truly content... marriage is as much for celebration of the past as hope for the future"

'Getting married is almost like inverse chic'

The recent press furor over Liam Gallagher and Patsy Kensit has really got me wondering. I mean, they're young, they're groovy, they're happening, they've been on the cover of *Vanity Fair*. They're at the epicenter of the *Zeigeist*. So what on earth do they want to get married for?

Does this mean that marriage is the new rock and roll? Liam and Patsy are hardly Middle England. For these two to get hitched is almost like inverse chic, the same sort of back-to-front logic as the return of lounge music. But it demonstrates a curious phenomenon: people still really want to get married. It doesn't matter how rock and roll they are, it doesn't matter how many times they've done it before, it doesn't matter how modern and iconoclastic they are.

But I have still not quite answered the question of why we are doing it. We are very much in love and there are no longer any family hindrances to marriage, but it would have been easy to carry on as we were. Neither of us bows to convention, and, as the older partner, I am not so naive as to think that a relationship can be made more secure by a scrap of paper.

But there is something else. Having lived with Mary for more than a decade, I know that I am truly content. When I asked her to marry me, it was as much for celebration of the past as hope for the future. I wanted some way of giving thanks for the wonderful years, and a marriage seemed the best, perhaps the only, acknowledgement. I never did get round to thinking what I would have done if Mary had said no.

BARRY TURNER

they don't believe you anyway: they give you the most patronising looks you've ever had in your life and tell you that of course you'll change your mind when you meet the right man.

Why is it that this ancient institution is so jealously guarded? Marriage was invented by people who were lucky to live to 40, in another time and another world. Nobody seems to be able to tell me why we're still doing it. When you ask people why they get married even the most articulate become vague.

Security, they say. It's the greatest commitment you can make, they mutter. Well, the statistics boys might have something to say about that. It's a funny security, say only until the lawyers get called in.

Sometimes, usually when they've been drinking, married people get a bit teary and say that marriage is the highest manifestation of their love for each other. This is where I start getting lost again. Dancing up an aisle in a big dress which costs enough to feed a family of four for a month, making vows about till death do us part, which

even the most naive must know are no more than an educated guess, and then watching all your friends and relations get drunk and make bad speeches, is not exactly my idea of love's greatest possible manifestation.

I have an absurd, romantic notion that love should exist for its own sake, not because of legal ties or ceremonial obligation.

If ever I consider spending the rest of my life with one person, I should like him to stay for me, not because he's said so in front of a crowd of people, not because

he's not ready for an institution. I don't want to hand over my identity by taking on someone else's name. I sometimes wake at night in a cold sweat at the idea of being Mrs Someone. I look at married couples and I don't think it looks like much fun to me. They're the ones who walk into parties and immediately head for opposite ends of the room. The wives complain that they never have sex any more, the husbands complain that they are emasculated and misunderstood.

We're told that marriage is hard work, a long, emotional slog, not just a walk in the park. I've heard women say that they never knew what it was like to be really lonely until they got married.

We've put men on the Moon, we've built a tunnel under the Channel, we're investigating the far reaches of cyberspace. Surely we have the imagination to come up with something better in human relations than an institution that came in with the Ark.

Personally, I think the ideal is to live in separate houses and still go on dates. That way, you not only keep the romance alive, but you never have to argue about who squeezed the toothpaste tube in the middle. And think of all those divorce lawyers who would be out of a job.

TANIA KINDERSLEY

• Tania Kindersley's most recent book, *Don't Ask Me*, is published by Sceptre.



Tania Kindersley: baffled

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Everyone is rushing down the aisle to join the trendiest club in town

Joe Joseph on the reasons why matrimony is right back in fashion

If you're the hip, rebellious type, then naturally the very last thing you want to do is rush off and get married. Because first of all you have to locate a suitable venue, discuss catering arrangements, commission a top florist, and make sure that Smythson's can get all the invitations engraved in time.

But matrimony has become so fashionable that people like Liam and Patsy, and Ricky and Bianca from *EastEnders* have all decided to join the trendiest club in town.

Why? Because at its best, marriage combines a mystical love with rollercoaster excitement — even if it's only the excitement of wondering whether your very next row will be the one that convinces you that you're sharing your life with someone with whom you have nothing in common beyond the right to trial by jury.

These passions and thrills together exert enough emotional pull to persuade even those rather unlikely spouses to get hitched: consider the supposed runaway Liam Gallagher of *Oasis*, or the supposed actress Pamela Anderson, Gallagher, who has just married. Patsy Kensit in secret, has made desert boots hip again. Why not marriage, too?

Daniel Day-Lewis, also in secret, has recently married Arthur Miller's daughter in Vermont, which joined chums who had him down as a confirmed bachelor. Pops' ever-whitening wonder Michael Jackson recently wed, and that was his second bite at the cherry, while last week on *EastEnders*, television's coolest soap, Ricky and Bianca finally got hitched.

Behaving like this is almost a rebellion against the convention of cohabiting. How widespread that rebellion? So widespread that Superman and Lois, after 60 years of cooing across the *Daily Planet* newscast, just tied the knot.

So what's the big attraction?

One of them is that living together isn't thought so hot any more. Research at the University of California, based on 45,000 marriages, has found that 50 per cent of cohabiting couples who subsequently married were divorced within five years; by contrast, fewer than 40 per cent of those who married without first living together split up during the same period.

Another attraction is that it is now proven that marriage is healthier than going to the gym, and without the need for so many freshly laundered towels.

Dr Inez Journe, an epidemiologist at Rotterdam's Erasmus Universi-

ty, has found that happily married couples suffer half the illness and spend half as much time in hospital as single people. Measuring the health of married people against that of single, cohabiting, divorced and widowed men and women for conditions ranging from heart disease to varicose veins, Dr Journe found that "married people were healthier than any of the others, particularly divorced people, who suffered from 30 per cent more chronic conditions".

Somehow, this scientific revelation still doesn't stop divorce in its tracks. Many women rush to the divorce courts because they feel that their husbands are slothful or insensitive or selfish. But in fact, most men do remember those small but important details of the woman in their life, such as their birthday and the fact that they have two eyes, one on either side of their

nose, probably brownish-blue. Any-

way, if women really wanted to

spend their life with something slim, sanitary and sensitive they'd set up home with a sterilised thermometer.

And just because some unhappy married women actually decide to do just that, don't jump to the conclusion that a booming divorce rate is a bad advertisement for marriage. It is only if you don't actually remarry. By remarrying, divorcees reaffirm their belief in marriage. It is the triumph of hope over experience. Take, for example, Hollywood, which has always been marriage city.

Mickey Rooney, Gloria Swanson, Rex Harrison, Elizabeth Taylor, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Johnny "Tarzan" Weissmuller, Ernest Borgnine, George C. Scott, Henry Fonda, Cary Grant, Rita Hayworth, Jason Robards, Eddie Fish-

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"The divorce rate is booming because the expectations of marriage have outstripped the education, preparation and support for it," says Dr Jack Domian, chairman of One Plus One, a charity

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In spite of this, says Dr Domian, "marriage remains very solid. People still want companionship, friendship, security, love, children. A stable family and a good job are the two most important things in life."

So, any tips on how to find the right partner, and how to then stay married to them? One Plus One's thinking is that "it's not the compatibility that matters — what is important is how you handle your disagreements."

Phyllis Diller, disparagingly, compared marriage to a bath, because "once you get into it, it's not so hot". In fact, marriage is like a bath because the longer you are married to someone, the wrinklier your skin gets. If your skin grows wrinkled with the same person for 30 years, then you probably got into the right bath.



The wedding half the nation stayed in for: now Ricky and Bianca from *EastEnders* are married, they are likely to be happier and healthier, according to psychologists

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ARTS
THE WEEK
AHEAD

■ POP

Right on with the voice of the Left: **Billy Bragg** agitates the Waterfront, Norwich GIG: Tonight REVIEW: Wednesday



■ MUSIC

Welcome to my town: **Simon Rattle** brings the Vienna Phil to Birmingham CONCERT: Tomorrow REVIEW: Thursday



■ OPERA

Angela Gheorghiu plays the coveted dame in *L'elisir d'amore* at Covent Garden OPENS: Tomorrow REVIEW: Thursday



■ BOOKS

John Wayne and the myth of American manhood is examined in a fascinating new study IN THE SHOPS: Now REVIEW: Thursday

The buzz of the new was unmistakable. Odd to come across it in the banqueting room of the Royal Lancaster Hotel, deeply carpeted with rolling acres of corridors and overlooking Hyde Park. Odder still to find it at an awards ceremony, usually the occasion for a hearty celebration of the obvious. Oddest of all perhaps that this new buzz is connected with what are usually categorised as the most expendable: advertisements, music videos, the design of CDs — and of Internet websites, for goodness sake! But the buzz was certainly there at *Music Week's* Creative and Design Awards. A new generation of British designers, artists and filmmakers has taken to conventional unregarded areas in the arts and is coming up trumps.

It was seeing a concentration of the work that convinced me. This was not just the latest batch of new kids on the block who are turning up equally in pop music, in television and in poetry. There was a feeling that here was a particular

In the world of 45 revolutions per minute

platoon with a grip on the advanced information technologies which will make a huge impact in the next century — and they were playing with them. A rather fanciful analogy occurred to me with the late Victorian age when Huxley's scientists and British engineers had the confidence to know that they were at a cutting edge, and revelled in it.

Certainly, at a time when universities are complaining about a decline in interest in science and engineering, it's intriguing that young men and women have acquired highly complex communication skills which they use for trade and manufacturing and yet practise as an art form.

Perhaps the nature of the gathering itself gave a clue. Despite the starched white napkins and the usual speedy awards three-course meal and all the established para-

phernalia of doing these things, this crowd was markedly different. It was substantially younger than most awarders. It was very casually dressed — or rather the male half was very casually dressed, although I am prepared to be told that the flapping shirts and general loose gear are in fact the giddy height of today's young male fashion. The female half was very smart but not Dressed Up For Awards smart. It was either Spice Girls out for fun or young career women in business.

Every runner-up and every winner was given a generous rousing bellow of appreciation from the committed tables. The speakers were brief, sotto voce and modest. The event of the evening came when one young winner held up his napkin and showed it around the room. He had written a proposal of marriage on it and he

was spotlighted back to his table where his bride-to-be (?) Sam was standing on the table — where else? — waiting for him.

Although the work done by these creative and design teams

was deeply involved with British pop music, it seems to me that many of the awards winners had not only taken advantage of that, but used it for their own ends to develop their skills.

Although the videos, for instance, were inevitably short, the craft and vision that had gone into them came from the same impulses which will most probably take many of these young filmmakers into feature films and television.

Tony Kearns, for example, who won the Best Editing in a Video category, spoke of his objective as "putting images on screen that bring out a sound or an instrument that maybe people have registered before, simply by hearing it". In short, adding his own dimension and making something new of it.

Chris Oddy, who did the art direction for the video for the past few hundred years.

A final thought: that here was a

tough, unsubsidised street-cred business and yet one which is of very high quality. It is driven by the same forces and instincts that drive all the other arts — which is no surprise. What was a surprise, though, was the amount of it, its confidence and the feeling that this mix of intensity and economy is becoming more crucial in film and the expertise shown here was at a cutting edge.

When *The English Patient* was first published as a novel there was much praise and some talk of its difficulty. A few critics seemed to believe that its complexity kept it properly for the few. Here was a novel that proved that certain treats were, in the end, for small elites.

I find it a matter for celebration, therefore, that since the film came out the book is being read all over the place. It is being pored over by masses who might have been thought way outside its natural target audience. They seem to be having no difficulty with it. Perhaps there still is a Common Reader after all.

Once Moor with feeling

■ OPERA

Otello
Covent Garden

Verdi's setting of Shakespeare's tragedy opens with such an almighty wallop in the orchestra that it's all to easy to think of it as a relentlessly loud opera, vocally and orchestrally. But the score is littered with markings of dolcissimo and pianissimo, and one of the many pleasures of last Thursday's revival was the fineness and delicacy of so much of the singing and playing. This was very far from being a routine revival hurled onstage; it had been really carefully prepared.

In his UK operatic debut, the Korean conductor Myung-

mens — the drinking song, the vengeance duet, that supremely painful duet for Otello and Desdemona in the third act — when one wanted a little more traditional weight of sound and phrase, but in general the performance made you think about the score afresh.

Vladimir Bogachov returned to the title role. He has all the notes, and the necessary ringing sound at the top, but it was his soft singing that impressed the most: he and his Desdemona, Kallen Esperian, sang the love duet with an easy lyricism that eludes so many more trumpet-like performers, and turned what can be something of a trial into an episode of genuinely Veridian beauty. Bogachov also has the elemental power of personality for the Moor, and his interpretation is free of any sense of artifice, which makes it all the more stirring. What you see is what you get.

Esperian's beautifully soft-grained tone never loses its

This was far from being a routine revival hurled onstage.



Strength in numbers: Vladimir Bogachov impresses as Otello in Verdi's opera

Sensual classics

JAZZ

Jobim Celebration
Barbican

ANONYMOUS who had doubts about Antonio Carlos Jobim's place in the first rank of this century's songwriters would have had them resolved by this display. His music is to our era what George Gershwin's represented to an earlier generation.

Tribute concerts so often degenerate into parades of guest stars determined to impose their own ego on the proceedings. What made this latest instalment of the Jazz At The Barbican series so memorable was that the performers were clearly determined to allow the seductive melodies to speak for themselves.

Neither Jobim's guitar-playing son, Paulo, nor the cellist Jaques Morelenbaum could remotely be described as star names; but having played on so many of the composer's records, they carry the harmonies in their bloodstream. The same is true of Paula Morelenbaum, whose astonishingly pure vocals were never troubled by the idiosyncratic melodic twists and instrumental-like intervals.

With Jobim's grandson Daniel at the piano, and Marcos Feijao in charge of a minimalist drum kit, the acoustic quartet offered compelling chamber settings of *Double Rainbow* — something of a jazz standard now — and the less familiar contours of *Surfboard*.

As for the better-known

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Richard Strauss

Ariadne on Naxos



End of a tour and an era

WHEN Erasure entered the synth-pop arena in 1986, Heaven 17 were already old news. So the final night of Andy Bell and Vince Clarke's latest excursion provided an anachronistic pleasure as the earlier electronic warriors completed their first tour as the duo's special guests.

Clarke was a turn-of-the-Eighties contemporary of Heaven 17 as a founder member of Depeche Mode, and has outlasted them as the strong and silent partner in Erasure.

After a jittery first act in his house debut, Paolo Gavallani (Iago) whammed into the Credo, his warm yet incisive tone more closely focused than his pinching. Thereafter, it was his soft singing that gripped the imagination. He was a horribly plausible Iago, wide-eyed and innocent, so *oносто* that he too seemed to be believing the lies he was telling. Spooky.

Timothy O'Brien's Veronese-inspired sets wear well, and Elijah Moshinsky's production was safe in the hands of Richard Gregson. Supporting roles were all well taken, and, as indicated, the chorus and orchestra were at their most alert. All manner of clouds may be gathering around Covent Garden, but what happens on stage is still world-class.

RODNEY MILNES

detachment brought an uneasy disparity.

So the lead singer played his usual Danny La Rue of pop while the "instrumentalist" tweaked the occasional knob on his synthesiser stack. Otherwise Clarke was an unintentionally comic spare part: even dressing him up as a cactus fell strangely flat.

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3-6 March

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17-20 March

24-27 March

31-3 April

8-11 April

15-18 April

22-25 April

29-31 April

5-8 May

12-15 May

19-22 May

26-29 May

2-5 June

9-12 June

16-19 June

23-26 June

30-3 July

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31-3 October

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16-18 April

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6-8 May

13-15 May

20-22 May

27-29 May

3-5 June

10-12 June

17-19 June

24



■ THEATRE
Curtain up at Chichester with Ian McShane starring in *The Admirable Crichton*
OPENS: Tomorrow
REVIEW: Thursday



■ DANCE
Rap, hip hop, and some of London's coolest movers: *Miracles* comes to the Albert Hall
GIG: Thursday
REVIEW: Saturday



■ FILM
Hitting new heights: Hitchcock's masterly *Vertigo* returns to the cinema screen
OPENS: Friday
REVIEW: Thursday



■ COUNTRY
The legend is back: Johnny Cash gives the old pipes a run-out at the Albert Hall
GIG: Friday
REVIEW: Monday

ARTS
TUESDAY TO FRIDAY IN SECTION 2

Queen of controlled chaos

THEATRE: Phyllida Lloyd, who thrives on danger, is about to direct Lorca at the Almeida. Daniel Rosenthal met her

As the first female associate director at the Manchester Royal Exchange, Phyllida Lloyd terrified some of the actors working with her on *Medea* and *The Winter's Tale*. Their fears, says Graham Murray, the Exchange's joint artistic director, had nothing to do with Lloyd's personality, which is "delightful and absolutely devoid of side", and everything to do with her methods.

She began rehearsing each play without a rigidly predetermined "vision", and invited the cast to keep contributing ideas until they were nearing the first performance. "The final synthesis happened very late," recalls Murray, "and some actors found that terrifying."

In the six years since Manchester, Lloyd's standing has soared, thanks to vibrant treatment of works as diverse as Britten's *Gloriana* and Terry Johnson's Freud-meets-Dali play, *Hysteria*; but time has not diminished her preference for collaboration amid what Murray calls "controlled chaos". Just days before her staging of Lorca's *Dona Rosita The Spinner* begins previewing at the Almeida Theatre, she calmly says: "We've got about 14 different productions going on at once."

Lloyd and Anthony Ward, the designer with whom she has worked "so often I've lost count", are tackling *Dona Rosita* for the second time. Equipped with a new translation by the playwright Peter Oswald, music by Gary Yershon, and choreography by Jonathan Lunn and Kathryn Hunter (who is also in the cast), they are fashioning an enterprise "completely different" from their 1989 production at the Bristol Old Vic.

Nonetheless, Lloyd remains just as daunted by the "abrupt, almost surreal juxtapositions" of linguistic and theatrical styles acknowledged in *Dona Rosita's* subtitle, *A poem... with scenes of song and dance*. "When people think of Lorca they think of the mythic, ritualised peasant tragedy of *Yerma* or *Blood Wedding*," she says. "But *Dona Rosita* is written in a very different key and defies those expectations."

As Rosita (Phoebe Nicholls in the

Almeida cast) retains a Penelope-like devotion to the fiancé who sails to Argentina in the first act, we move from 1890 to 1900 to 1910 without leaving the Granada garden obsessively tended by Rosita's uncle (Clive Swift). Rosita waits and withers, her aunt (Eleazar Bron) argues with their garrulous housekeeper (Celia Imrie), visitors come and go, naturalistic prose alternates with richly symbolic verse.

"It feels like music made up of extraordinarily diverse movements," says Lloyd. "At times, there is a lightness to the dialogue which is like Wilde, but the final moments resemble the last act of *The Cherry Orchard*. It's a huge challenge to find the essential rhythms within all of this."

"That's why plays are much more difficult to direct than operas. In opera, I have no control over where something begins and ends: the composer establishes the rhythm and the conductor establishes the tempi. I just have to decide how things happen between fixed points. With a play, you could make an infinite number of choices in determining the pause between two words."

Such generalisation might suggest that Lloyd is blasé about her work for Opera North, or the Verdi *Macbeth* which she and Ward will "unleash" on the Royal Opera in June. But she draws attention to the theatre-opera divide to point up "different disciplines", not greater rewards. Directing Josephine Barstow in *Gloriana* (which she hopes to film when it is revived in 1999) was as "thrilling" as anything she has done in the theatre, and she admits to "great trepidation" over the *Macbeth* that will mark her international opera debut.

Her first directorial credit of any kind came a little over 20 years ago, with a production at her boarding school in Malvern. At 18, she was determined to become an actress until her parents persuaded her to obtain a degree as an insurance policy against the habitual insecurities of Equity life.

"Reading drama at Birmingham



Phyllida Lloyd: "Plays are much more difficult to direct than operas. With a play, you have choices"

University, I quickly realised I was not a good enough actress," she recalls. "Nor did I have the tenacity to withstand the repeated rejections that actors face."

After directing student productions, she stayed in Birmingham, working as a floor assistant and then assistant floor manager at BBC Television. But the prospect of following what she guessed would be a ten-year path to TV directing proved unbearable for a woman still obsessed by the stage. With a scrounged £800 she directed a pub production which led to her first paid directing assignment, at the

Swan Theatre, Worcester, and she gave Auntie notice. Her parents thought she was mad.

From Worcester she went to the Wooley, Cheltenham, for a "six-plays-a-year baptism of fire that taught me how to manoeuvre people and language in everything from Shakespeare to Aycliffe". By the time Murray offered her the Manchester job after seeing her "superlative" Bristol production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, she was being mentioned alongside Deborah Warner as "one of Britain's best woman directors".

Her response to that implicitly chauvinist label is philosophical: "I'm very lucky to be mentioned in those terms, but I don't think of myself as a woman director. She is constantly aware, however, that as a director she can look forward to a longer career than she might have had as an actress. 'Actresses face the fearful prospect of becoming unemployable as they lose their looks. As long as I keep my wits, I hope I'll direct for as long as possible — and that I'll get better."

• *Dona Rosita* preview at the Almeida Theatre, Islington, from Wednesday (0171-359 4404)

The Third Brandenburg and the

Swedish RSO/Kamu Festival Hall

storyteller in St Anthony's sermon to the fishes, to an increasingly steely and embittered observer of war and the pity of war in *Rewillie* and *Der Tambourine*.

Some speeds in the Mahler hovered on the edge of being dangerously slow for both Larson and her orchestral accompaniments.

And it was the somewhat safe, steady tempo relationships in the Tchaikovsky which reined in the passion, and made this a circumspect, albeit noble and rigorously disciplined performance.

The SRSO's strings play with a lustrous, compact unanimity. This quality, together with the strong character of each woodwind principal, ensured that Kamu could build and sustain many a good head of steam. The climaxes of the second movement and the ferocity of the final march were admirably achieved: all the performance needed was a more acute sense of the symphony's nervous system, and a longer and more fearless look into its own heart of darkness.

HILARY FINCH

Slow but steady

Esa-Pekka Salonen is hanging over his superbly schooled Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra to Yevgeny Svetlanov from next season and, at the start of their English tour (Newcastle on Friday, Birmingham on Saturday), the band signed on with a tribute to their outgoing chief in a robust performance of Sibelius's *Karelia Suite*, and they signed off in Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, with a salute to their principal conductor-elect.

Oko Kamu, principal conductor at Finnish National Opera, is meanwhile on the podium for this tour, and his deep understanding of the human voice, Sweden's strongest musical calling-card in this fast, half-century, galvanised the evening's central performance of ten songs from Mahler's *Das Knaben Wunderhorn*.

Two young Swedish singers brought their folk-cameos to fresh life. Mezzo Anna Larsson, just two years out of college, progressed from a courageous but still under-projected *Urlicht* to *Rheinlegendchen* and *Das irdische Leben*. And baritone Peter Manzi, considerably more experienced and already with *formidably* expressive vocal technique, moved compellingly from a bumpkin or a

lusty, compact unanimity. This quality, together with the strong character of each woodwind principal, ensured that Kamu could build and sustain many a good head of steam. The climaxes of the second movement and the ferocity of the final march were admirably achieved: all the performance needed was a more acute sense of the symphony's nervous system, and a longer and more fearless look into its own heart of darkness.

HILARY FINCH

90-second wonder

Guildhall String Ensemble Wigmore Hall

fugal section of the B Minor Suite's Ouverture were fleet but accented evenly and heavily. Experience with period instruments should have shown how accents need to be finely calibrated, how lines are shaped by variety of articulation and attack and decay on gut strings. But there was little sense of any of that here.

The flautist Emily Beynon, principal with the Royal Concertgebouw, brought some sense of style, and Paul Nicholson's harpsichord playing was exemplary — his cadenza in the Fifth Brandenburg outstanding.

With its overlapping layers and shifts of perspective, Panufnik's *Landscape* depicts a landscape of the mind, but it also reflects the composer's appreciation of Bach's "geometric structures". Panufnik's *Hommage à Chopin* has two especially evocative movements, the first and last, in which the poignant dissonances were lightly touched in by the ensemble, and Beynon's mellifluous tone was heard to admirable effect.

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Europe is rooting for Blair

Michael Butler says our partners want to negotiate reasonably

There are many good reasons for voting Labour in the election. Britain needs a change. In a democracy no single party should remain too long in power. The Tories are quarrelling among themselves. Above all, their policies on Europe have become increasingly damaging both to the national interest and to the efficient conduct of business in the EU.

More and more, the Conservatives have been addressing their internal problems rather than trying to deal effectively with the issues of national importance with which they are faced in the EU Council and at the inter-governmental conference on treaty amendment. They made a complete hash of the BSE crisis, vetoing proposals they had previously worked hard to have adopted, irritating other EU governments to the point of wanting to do it down and failing totally to have the beef ban lifted. In the inter-governmental conference they have sought to placate their own Eurosceptics by striking intransigent postures while letting Britain's interests go unrepresented. If they were returned to power and continued as before, Britain would find itself left out of more and more important decisions, until our membership ceases to have any value.

Promoting and protecting British interests in the EU is not important for party political games. We have to learn to work with rather than against our European partners. We have to seek allies in support of our proposals. John Major's Government has failed in this respect. I have been involved at almost every stage of our policy in Europe since 1981, and no previous British government has been held in such contempt.

As an adviser to Labour on European policy, I have been talking privately to representatives of most of the EU governments over the past few months. No other British government has ever, even during Labour's "renegotiation" in 1974-75 or Margaret Thatcher's budget refund campaign in the early 1980s, been in a position in which no other government was willing to give it any support at all.

The other governments know very well that Tony Blair and his colleagues will promote and protect the national interest with determination, but they do not expect ideological anti-European attitudes to prevail in the Labour Party, or the sort of divisions that have disfigured the Conservative Party. I myself have talked often enough with Robin Cook to know that he will deal with the host of difficult issues which the Tories will bequeath to him in a moderate and reasonable way. Labour will want Britain to start winning a few rounds in Brussels.

The Eurosceptic myths are too vague to be easy to deal with. Significant numbers of Tories seem genuinely, indeed passionately, to believe that the EU is threatening the British way of life, that Chancellor Kohl is the new Bismarck, and that Germany is about to abolish British sovereignty by EU means, having failed to do so by force of arms. They dismiss with contempt the thought that the EU provides reassurance that Western Europe countries will never fight each other again. Their hostility to other Europeans is such that they seem completely oblivious to the fact that the countries that make up the EU are all free democracies which have chosen to work together for the common good.

Eurosceptic Conservative backbenchers belittle our European trade — even though we export more to The Netherlands than to all the Asian tigers put together. They also fail to realise that we have given up more sovereignty by becoming dependent on the Americans in Nato than by signing the Treaty of Maastricht. Their judgment is distorted by prejudice and fear, and their controlling influence over national policy has been deeply damaging to Britain.

The other EU governments are well informed by their embassies in London. They do not expect a Blair government to be a pushover — they have seen how firmly he has acted to reform his party — but they do expect Labour ministers to be reasonable men and women seeking agreements that protect British interests. I have been able to tell them with complete conviction that their expectation is correct. I appeal to my fellow citizens who want Britain to succeed in Europe to join me in voting Labour.

Sir Michael Butler was Britain's Permanent Representative to the EC, 1979-85.

Apathy may lead to a low turnout this time, but the young generation is enterprising and promising

We canvassed a thousand houses in the Central Fife constituency on Saturday. In all, about 7,500 have been canvassed so far, and the plan is to get over the half-way mark before polling day. There are about 25,000 houses in the constituency. As the Conservatives run third to Labour and the SNP, this will be no small achievement. My younger son, Jacob, is fighting Central Fife as though it were a marginal, which it certainly is not.

There were 18 canvassers on Saturday, a mixed collection of local activists, family — Annunziata interrupted her A-level revision to come up here — Jacob's friends from London and Hong Kong, and students from Edinburgh University. Jacob is much teased by the left-wing press because he has the support of his nanny, Veronica Crook, who has been with us for more than 30 years. In fact, she proves to be the star canvasser, quick, friendly, tackling Glenrothes new town as though she were visiting neighbours in the Somerset village of Rington. She even handles repartee on the doorstep. "He's a Scot" — "No Scot put it in for it."

The canvass leaves little doubt about the result. As in 1992, Labour will win comfortably, the SNP will be the main challenger; there are Conservatives about, but not enough of them. On Saturday none of the canvassers came across a single Liberal voter; the only Referendum Party supporters we saw were the candidate and his agent, who were leafleting Leven High Street at the same time as we were. I felt sheepish handing out Conservative leaflets outside Boots: I partially saved my status as a journalist and a Lord's cross-bencher by refraining from wearing a rosette. My leafleting is in any case far too tentative; eventually I bought a copy of *The Big Issue* and gave the vendor a leaflet in exchange.

We start the day canvassing in Macedonia, a district of Glenrothes that is reached via St Columbus roundabout. Glenrothes has more roundabouts and

humps in the road than any other town I have ever been in. They are designed to frustrate canvassers as well as motorists. The street plan looks like one of those mazes which used to be published in comics for little children. We fan out: I accompany Jacob, who is also accompanied by a *Daily Telegraph* correspondent and a photographer. Some of the soundbites have reached Glenrothes. "I'm on the dole, but I wouldn't vote for Tony."

Jacob strides ahead. I find another Tory. She is a Londoner, a grandmother who has moved to Glenrothes to be close to her grandchildren. "I've never voted Labour after living under Hammersmith Council." She says she is a refugee from Ken Livingstone. Jacob is talking to a wavering voter, who voted Tory last time. In voting terms, this is the main value of canvassing: it reconfirms supporters who have become doubtful. In political terms it has an even greater value in letting the candidates meet five opinions. People tell us that no party has canvassed them personally in years. One old lady complains that she has been canvassed by telephone; she does not know which party did it, for she put down the receiver, but she thinks it is an extravagant waste of money.

At dinner, when we are discussing the day's experience, it is the negatives that stand out. The biggest, and most worrying, is the feeling of apathy, bordering on resentment, of many of the voters. "They're all the same . . . They've never done anything for me . . . It won't make

any difference . . . I never have anything to do with politics . . . I'm not going to vote." This election may prove to be the event which politicians have always feared: a protest general election; some of the blame for these public resentments inevitably falls on the government of the day, but much of it falls on politics and politicians as such. I fear there may be a low poll throughout the country.

The second big negative is Tony Blair's image. Presumably Henry Mc-

Labour" means nothing at all. It is a London event.

The biggest negative of all is the SNP. They are not, I think, greatly improving their position in Central Fife, though they have a good candidate. Like most Englishmen I have a sympathy with traditional Scottish nationalism, though one notable Scottish ancestor, Andrew Henderson, supported the Hanoverians against Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745, as many Scottish patriots did. The SNP has, however, now moved to the left of the four parties in Scotland, the Conservatives are furthest to the right, then comes Labour, then the Liberal Democrats, and the SNP are on the left wing. They advocate a so-called independent Scotland inside what would have to be a federal regional Europe. That would transfer power from London to Brussels, and from democracy to bureaucracy. In fact, they make much more sense in a Westminster studio than they do in the ground in Scotland.

The second big negative is Tony Blair's image. Presumably Henry Mc-

Leish, the Labour candidate, speaks enthusiastically of him, but so far the only other person I have heard do so is myself. I told an evening meeting in the Victoria Hall that I thought he was "open, intelligent and courageous", though I went on to say I thought he was a Tory. The next warmest support for him was one woman who said she was going to vote "for Tony Blair". Otherwise in Central Fife he is a non-person. Most of the Labour voters are voting Labour because that is their party. Central Fife has inherited a solid Scottish Labour culture from the days before 1914, when the young men went down the pits to dig coal for the Balfour family. Here "new

has heard a single reference to foreign policy on the doorstep.

Europe is a real issue, perhaps the only issue which is getting through the apathy. The voters of Central Fife are, so far as I can judge, predominantly Eurosceptic. The Referendum Party agent finds that SNP supporters are his best converts, once they discover that the SNP is not an independence party, but a Euro-federalist one. The decision of John Major to allow a free vote in Parliament on the single currency appears on the doorstep to be not a blunder, but the best decision he has made in this campaign. He has freed Tory candidates to say what they really think without feeling disloyal: voters are more impressed by the fresh air of honest opinions than by the breakdown of party discipline.

In the end, I feel heartened by the canvassing group as much as by the results they are achieving. All of those who have come to support Jacob from outside the constituency, apart from Veronica and his parents, are aged between 18 and 28. Few of them have political ambitions themselves. They are all global in their viewpoint. They see Europe as only part of the bigger world. They are not aggressively right-wing. Their personal causes include such issues as the international prevention of torture; they feel strongly about the future of Bosnia and Tibet. They believe in open markets because they have worked in them. First-year students at Edinburgh University, reading hard subjects such as mechanical engineering, give up a day to canvass Central Fife. That must be good news for the future health of British politics.

From what I see of them, as the friends of my children, this British generation of the 1990s is proving an exceptionally good one. They have an openness and courage that are very attractive. They are prepared to work and are realistic. They see the new opportunities of the world, but have compassion for its suffering. A Tory party that can appeal to their idealism will recover from any defeat.

Fife is marching to a different drum

And tomorrow, the world

Peter Riddell asks whether Tony Blair's globalism means betraying old supporters

Tony Blair is now in the paradoxical position of a general on the brink of a triumph which many of his troops regard as hollow. On May 1, Labour should win only the third decisive election victory in its history, after 1945 and 1966. But many of Labour's traditional supporters, as opposed to the Blairite vanguard, are more enthusiastic about getting rid of the Tories than about what a "new" Labour government might achieve.

Polls suggest that turnout may be well down in safe Labour seats, while several candidates defending big majorities report a flat response, especially from older voters on council estates. This is apart from the ambivalent attitude towards Blairism of union leaders (as at the Scottish TUC this week) and the disillusionment of many Labour intellectuals that Robert Taylor reports in the current *Spectator*. Of course, many of the intellectuals are relics of the battles of the 1960s and 1970s who have never understood why Labour lost in the 1980s, or former Marxists who have embraced Labour modernisation as the only hope for the Left. Others accept the demise of "old" Labour, but wonder whether "new" Labour is any more than effective campaigning tactics masking shallow populism. American observers like Joe Klein have been quick to draw unfavourable parallels with Bill Clinton.

Their doubts contrast with the enthusiasm that Labour generated in 1945 and in 1964-66. In the war years up to 1945, a broad consensus in favour of extensive social reform and public ownership had been established, in part by Labour members of the wartime coalition, who went on to dominate the Attlee Government. In the mid 1960s, Harold Wilson skilfully identified with, and exploited, a revolt against an "old school tie" regime, as he called it, and in favour of more active government and intervention in the economy. This enthusiasm barely outlasted Labour's landslide win in 1966 before disenchantment set in.

The mood now is less clearcut. Many left-wing intellectuals and traditional



RIDDELL ON MONDAY

Labour supporters reject the free market approach of the Thatcher and others. Major years, and want to return to progressive taxation and higher public spending. But Mr Blair and his allies do not. They have rejected redistribution through the tax system and embraced international capitalism. Indeed, the distinctive feature of Mr Blair's approach, as of Mr Clinton's, is its explicit acceptance of globalisation: free trade and markets, deregulation, tight fiscal and monetary policy and limits on levels of taxation.

The desirability of globalisation is being challenged on the American Left in new books by Robert Kuttner and William Greider as well as in an article entitled "The Capitalist Threat" by that ubiquitous trendsetter George Soros. Dick Gephardt, minority leader in the House and a strong runner for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2000, has also raised his standard on this ground, arguing for environmental and labour safeguards in any new free trade deals.

In Britain, this argument has been less prominent, though it has been echoed in the elegant critiques of the political philosopher John Gray and in the more rumbustious polemics of the journalist Will Hutton. The latter's sweeping denunciations of British finance and industry for short-termism have been widely attacked as exaggerated and flawed, but have been influential among the less sophisticated on the Left. Hutton has offered an alternative programme based on constitutional reform and the continental or "Rhenish" model of social and industrial partnership under the doctrine of "stakeholding", partially qualified in his new book, *The State to Come*.

Mr Blair appeared for a time to be veering in this direction when he emphasised the term "stakeholding" in big speeches in January last year, in Tokyo and Singapore. But his advisers quickly made clear that he did not endorse the kinds of changes to the legal structure of

companies envisaged by Hutton and opposed by the CBI and others. Stakeholding was presented as merely an umbrella term for social inclusiveness, rather than a specific programme.

However, Tory policymakers such as David Willetts argue that "new" Labour has embraced a discredited continental approach (as opposed to the successful Anglo-American version) which risks giving the unions more power, adding to industrial costs and undermining Britain's competitiveness. Mr Blair has argued that signing the social chapter on constitutional reform and the continental or "Rhenish" model of social and industrial partnership under the doctrine of "stakeholding", partially qualified in his new book, *The State to Come*.

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roots and could quickly lose support. But Blairism does represent a new approach, possibly the only one available for a centre-left party now. Like Mr Clinton, Mr Blair argues that the job of centre-left governments is to enable ordinary people to benefit, rather than suffer, from the economic and social changes produced by globalisation. In his City speech two weeks ago, he developed what he called "flexibility plus": building on flexible labour markets with welfare reform, a greater emphasis on education and job training to equip people with the necessary skills, and investment in infrastructure, science and research.

That is, of course, straight Bill Clinton. But as Robert Reich, the Labor Secretary in the first Clinton term, argues in his memoir *Locked In the Cabinet*, extra funding for education and training immediately became a victim of the pressures of financial markets and the need to reduce the budget deficit. Labour has tried to avoid this problem by avoiding the promises of higher spending that Mr Clinton made in 1992, and by accepting tight expenditure restraints from the start. The only pledge of substance from Labour has been to take 250,000 young unemployed off the dole, but this is being financed through the one-off windfall levy on the privatised utilities.

Mr Blair is relying on a shift of spending from welfare to education, but this will take time. So it is hard to see how "flexibility plus" can be turned into reality without raising taxes, or accepting more private provision. Labour's policies and scaramouche campaign rhetoric on health and social security are inconsistent without extra spending.

Of course, much will look different in two weeks' time if Labour has a clear Commons majority. However limited the pledges, and however low the expectations, there will be a new beginning. There will be a sense of excitement, and probably much hot air about a new "Camelot". While it may be largely Tory measures, Labour men and women will bring a fresh approach.

Mr Blair has played safe so far in the campaign, understandably in view of Labour's huge poll lead. A rare exception was last Thursday in Edinburgh, when he delivered a rousing speech to the faithful, but emphasising mainly the "old" Labour verities rather than the "new" Labour arguments. Mr Blair now needs to show where and how Labour could really make a difference, how it could transcend the spending and tax constraints set by the Tories. Can a centre-left party make a success of free market capitalism without betraying its supporters?



Mother and child reunion: Hayley and Crispian Mills

Boris Johnson, the Daily Telegraph columnist and Conservative candidate for Clwyd South, has a nifty campaign greeting. "It's a lovely day," he tells voters, gripping them firmly by the hand and glancing skywards. "Don't let Labour spoil it."

P.H.S

Blarney II

HILLARY CLINTON is hoping to visit Ireland later this year without her husband. She came in 1995 with the President during the IRA ceasefire. So impressed was she by what she saw that she wants to come back, taking in both Ulster and the Republic on her trip.

The atmosphere of any visit will be very different to her husband's euphoric tour when the guns were silent and he could speak hopefully of the path to peace. She will stick to the usual. First Lady round of school and hospital visits, avoiding anything like the staged surprise meeting between the President and Gerry Adams outside a Belfast bakery.

"A visit from her will show that the President still cares about Ireland even after his re-election," says one prominent Washington Irishman. "But it will avoid any of the political awkwardnesses of a full presidential tour."

Not that the Administration has



"I thought adopting the purple was going too far"

Major's policy towards Ireland, having gone so far as to issue visas to Sinn Fein men against the express wishes of the Foreign and Northern Ireland Offices.

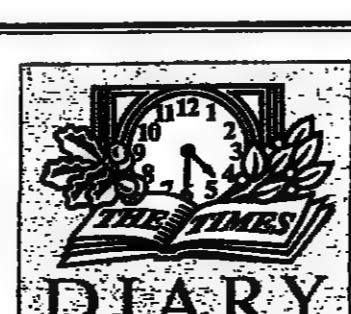
"Clinton's team are hoping for a

RESULTS are in for the Classical Association's limerick contest. Readers of the *Classical Association's Limerick* magazine were given the first two lines of two limericks and had to complete the rest. H.H. Huxley came up with this for the first one:

There were two young girls in the *Scilicet*.
Who cut up *The Times* for their frillies.
Would show poor sense of dress.
Tempora mutantur nos et mutantur illis

There were even more entries completing the limerick which began: "There was a young girl of Naupactus / Who had an affair with a cactus." Sadly they must remain confined to the top shelf.

Professionalism has brought bunny girls to rugby union. One



"I thought adopting the purple was going too far"

player who recently visited Bedford, in the second division, reports: "You come storming out ready to play, and there on either side of the players' tunnel are two chesty girls in skimpy T-shirts and shorts. I mean, you want to stop and say hello, not go and play. It's a low-down, dirty tactic."

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UNIONS PAST

The test for Labour from labour has yet to come

From the braziers of Basildon to the serried ranks of Scotland's shop stewards the weekend's broadcast images have brought encouragement for the Tories. Party leaders have tried to exploit the Essex firemen's strike and the Scottish TUC's centenary congress to rekindle fears of a brush fire of union activism should Labour win on May Day. Unhelpful as the pictures may be for Tony Blair, the election of a Labour government should not, however, mean a trip down Militant's memory lane. The changes wrought in the Labour Party, and to a lesser extent in the union movement, suggest there will be no turning back to the days of Social Contract and Solomon Binding.

Both David Blunkett, the Shadow Employment Secretary, and John Monks, the TUC General Secretary, have made it clear that beer and sandwiches will be off the Downing Street menu. Many of Labour's employment policies still fall far short of a workers' wish list. The adoption of the social chapter, the embrace of a minimum wage and plans for compulsory union recognition do not sit comfortably with new Labour's commitment to enterprise. But, as Mr Monks argued yesterday, they do not amount to a Faustian pact.

Many of the rank and file have unfulfilled expectations of a Labour government. There will be early attempts by some workers, particularly in the public sector, to flex dormant muscles after 18 years in opposition. Mr Blair will need to show iron resolve in facing down his own supporters if his ambitions are not to be thwarted. He has stated as clearly as possible his determination to do that.

Mr Blunkett dismissed the relevance to Labour's policies of this year's STUC motions by arguing that "nothing that may be said or passed at a conference held by a separate organisation will affect them in the slightest". His words reflected not just the constitutional position of the STUC, but also

the party's determination to distance itself from the movement that gave it birth.

The launch of Labour's business manifesto, the prominence accorded entrepreneurs in party election broadcasts and the incantation of "fairness not favours" underline the party's estrangement from its roots. Indeed Labour's process of distancing itself from the unions is still not complete. If in government, Labour will set its minimum wage in alliance with employers and it proposes further to marginalise the unions with an internal reorganisation that will take power away from Conference and centralise it in the hands of the leader.

Conscious of the party's intention to move from amicable separation to divorce, the union movement has been preparing for a new relationship. The TUC leadership's past pretensions to partnership in government have been replaced with a new emphasis on providing services in the workplace.

Many of their older members, however, have been slow to adapt. For workers in the state sector there is still a belief that Christmas will come on May 2 this year. Gordon Brown has stressed that there will be no extra money available but that will not prevent activists attempting to call his bluff. The firemen's strike in Essex and the recent teacher's dispute in Glasgow are the first salvoes for what could become a fusillade of pay claims.

Although a Labour government might have much early goodwill, that could soon dissipate if it has to say no, no, to teachers, firemen and nurses. But it must stand firm if it is not to see its room for manoeuvre and the nation's finances squandered. Rather than indulging the unions' fantasies, a Labour government should embrace market disciplines to deliver services efficiently. It will not be easy. There may be many more braziers lit and angry motions passed before Labour proves itself fully worthy of the trust it is asking from new voters.

KINGS OF THE BALKANS

Former monarchs see new roles for themselves

Towering over his would-be subjects, Leka Zog, son of modern Albania's eccentric first king, was yesterday given a tumultuous welcome by tens of thousands of supporters as he visited the village where his father was born just over a century ago. The pretender, who has spent all but the first two days of his life in exile, was making a triumphant visit to his turbulent homeland, greeted with fierce clan loyalty that appeared undiminished by more than 40 years of communism. Meanwhile, former King Simeon of Bulgaria was yesterday celebrating the strong showing of monarchists in his country's weekend general election. And former King Michael of Romania, fresh from an emotional return to the country over which he ruled for several crucial years before being forced into exile half a century ago, is now an official emissary, a persuasive advocate of early entry for Romania into Nato.

Monarchy, it seems, has never been as popular in the Balkans. The three pretenders are presenting themselves as unifying figures at a time of economic and political turbulence. After the collapse of communism, all were rebuffed in their initial attempts to reclaim their thrones. But all have recently stirred a new interest in their homelands. Monarchist parties have been formed, crowds have mobbed the men once reviled as relics of a bourgeois past, and politicians have been eager to invoke their aura and overseas prestige.

Leka Zog is probably the most improbable contender. His father was a tribal chieftain, who proclaimed himself King in 1928 and ruled for only 11 years. His son, whisked out of the country as the Italians invaded, has spent much of his life in South Africa. He has returned at a time of extraordinary upheaval, and though Albanians are now hailing him as a saviour who will rescue them from penury and feuding, few know

much about him. He is posing as king of all Albanians, including those who live across the frontier in Kosovo — a nationalist appeal bound to stir up trouble in Serbia and Macedonia. And he is in danger of being used by anti-Berisha forces, including the former communists, simply as a way of ousting a President most southerners now regard as anathema.

Former King Simeon has a more solid basis of support. Bulgarians, like Albanians, are going through a period of enormous hardship, but unlike their Balkan neighbours are not torn asunder by tribal enmity. The electoral victory of the Union of Democratic Forces at the weekend, expected after the incompetence of the socialist Government, does not guarantee any swift improvement in Bulgaria's parlous economy. But it does place reform firmly back on track. Many UDF supporters have backed the restoration of the king, as has the monarchist party that polled some 8 per cent. But most Bulgarians recognise that a pivotal role is now being played by President Stoyanov; few are willing to jeopardise his position for the sake of historic sentiment.

Perhaps the most revered of the three is former King Michael, a man whose own

courage in dismissing the pro-fascist Government during the war and resisting the communists have won him enduring respect. Despite his advancing years, he is energetically promoting his country's case to Nato. He too is unlikely to supplant President Constantinescu, who has already done much to consolidate democracy. But the former King's new official role is a likely first step towards a permanent return.

Stability, continuity and a peaceful focus for national ideals are desperately needed in the Balkans at present. The three men, even if they do not ascend the throne, can still do much to help their struggling countries.

AND IN COMING MILLENNIA

A warm spell followed by a cold snap

For most of us, long-range weather forecasting concerns whether or not it will rain this Thursday. Clare Goodess and Jean Palutikof of the Climatic Research Union at the University of East Anglia see somewhat further ahead, predicting Britain's weather for the next 20,000 years.

At one level, of course, this should not prove difficult: it will always rain when England threatens to win a Test match but never when defeat is imminent. At another, this is the triumph of optimism over experience. The good doctors admit as much when they acknowledge that their findings "invite derision". Some might suggest this is the point where meteorology becomes astrology with isobars.

Yet what they outline is important. Global warming is a serious phenomenon. It will last at least 10,000 years and possibly 10,000 years. The water level will be raised and low-lying areas of Britain will be flooded. This might cast some doubt on the wisdom of locating the Climate Research Unit in East Anglia.

After that, there will be a period of relative stability rather similar to the weather we have enjoyed in recent years. Unfortunately, this will be little more than a temporary interlude: for 70,000 years after that, conditions akin to the Ice Age will predom- inate.

Virtualy all of northern England will be uninhabitable. That means at some point it should be possible to prevent Manchester United winning the league title.

Such prophecy might seem stark. But it at least reflects the British tradition of compromise. In the 1960s, excessive rain across the planet was the theory of the moment. By the 1970s, scientific opinion strongly inclined to a new ice age. Come the 1980s, a spectacular U-turn had been executed and global warming was all the fashion. Now, a pleasing middle ground has been found: a warm spell followed by a cold snap. All sides can be satisfied.

One or two passionate souls have suggested that all this is irrelevant. Why should any of us, on Earth now, be remotely bothered about the climate several thousand years hence? This shows an appalling absence of community spirit. According to the academics, the future Ice Age would be much worse were it not for the present trend towards global warming. That tendency, we are constantly told, is due to man's misuse of his environment. On that basis, if we were only more irresponsible, we could raise short-term temperatures, ensuring that every spring was as mild and magnificent as this one and still save our successors from excessive cold in the future.

Williams wanted to show that this is a verbal dispute and nothing else. and he did so with his usual learning and clarity of argument. The issue is of great interest to all lawyers — and

'Prejudice' and the debate on Europe

From Lord Howell, PC

Sir, It is always deplorable when prejudice is elevated into a virtue. Where that occurs in an election campaign for the purpose of vote-winning, irrespective of the likely damage to the economic interests of British industry or the political interests of our country, then it would be disastrous if it succeeds.

What sort of reception in Europe does John Major expect to find if he returns there as Prime Minister (reports, April 19)? He is piling insult upon insult towards our partners in Europe, disgracefully trying to inject them into the general election campaign as some sort of demons, at war with British interests.

All decisions taken by the heads of Government have to be negotiated. Where does he expect to find a single country ready to negotiate to our advantage as a result of this tirade?

And then in the aftermath of this political disaster, how does he believe that this will serve the interests of our economy and British industry? Inward investment by companies wishing to establish themselves here as a base from which they can sell to Europe will be undermined. The 60 per cent of our industrial productivity now going to Europe will be put severely at risk, threatening industrial and job security.

There was a time when political leaders always put the national interest before party interest in their statesmanship. The prospect of electoral defeat is no excuse for the Prime Minister to desert these principles.

Yours sincerely,
DENIS HOWELL
(President,
Labour Movement in Europe).
House of Lords.
April 20.

From Mr E. C. Robinson

Sir, Dame Angela Rumbold and the more than 200 so-called Tory "rebel" MPs are widely criticised for forcing Europe to the forefront of the election campaign at the expense of party unity.

To the contrary, they have done great service to the cause of democracy by refusing to ignore a major concern of ordinary voters who, by intellect and instinct, sense that Britain is approaching one of the defining moments in its history.

The real shame should be borne by the leading politicians, party managers, spin doctors and the rest who have sought to stifle genuine debate.

Yours sincerely,
E. C. ROBINSON,
142 Burbage Road, SE21.
April 18.

From Mr N. J. D. Baptiste

Sir, Baroness Blackstone ("A party of positive Europeans", April 18) seeks partly to justify our EU membership by the fact that we export twice as much to Denmark as to China. In 1972, before we joined the Common Market, we had an export surplus with the west European countries of £172 million. We now have an annual trade deficit with the EU countries of £12 billion while with every other major area of the world, where three quarters of our overseas investments lie, our trade is in surplus.

It can be entirely coincidental that Norway and Switzerland, who chose to remain outside the EU but enjoy free trade arrangements with it, are now the two richest countries in Europe per head of population?

Yours faithfully,
N. J. D. BAPTISTE,
23 Gladwyn Road, Putney, SW15.
April 18.

From Mr Norris McWhirter

Sir, James Provan, MEP for South Downs West, tells us (letter, April 18) that the future European Central Bank would take just £3,000 million of our gold reserves, rather than the whole £27,000 million. As a comparsy, unconsulted Euro-citizen, I would prefer to look at Protocol 3.3.1 of the Maastricht treaty, under which we have empowered the ECB "to hold and (to) manage the official foreign reserves of Member states", ie, the whole lot.

If Mr Provan and his 86 colleagues, who are sustained at a cost of £1,146,900 per annum, per annum by the British taxpayer, were to object to any further of six tranches of £3 billion each, they could and doubtless would be out-voted more than six-fold by up to 539 MEPs whom we have not elected.

Any further resistance to such a "pooling" of our resources, authorised by Title II, preamble 8, of the Treaty of European Union would be crushed by our new Supreme Court, handing down one of its unappealable judgments from its power base in Luxembourg.

Yours faithfully,
NORRIS McWHIRTER,
22 Queen's Gate Gardens, SW7.
April 18.

From Mr S. R. Edwards

Sir, What will the Labour Party do in the unfortunate event of being elected to power, when they no longer have Conservative government policy to follow?

Yours faithfully,
S. R. EDWARDS,
1 Isabella Place,
70 Church Road, Combe Down, Bath.
April 16.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Dilemmas for bone marrow donors

From Professor Ian M. Franklin

Sir, Your report today of the dilemma facing the sister of Angela Latham, the woman who may benefit from a bone marrow transplant, poses a number of important questions about the relationship between potential bone marrow donors, their recipients and their respective physicians.

It would be inappropriate to make light of the general anaesthetic and post-operative pain that marrow donors must endure. In addition, most marrow transplant procedures have a long-term success rate of about 50-60 per cent, and so the donor may suffer feelings of guilt and failure if a transplant is unsuccessful.

The donor should be protected by being represented by an independent and knowledgeable doctor who can ensure that the donor's interests remain paramount. Donors, whether family or unrelated, must have complete confidence that donation will only go ahead after appropriate informed consent is obtained and it is confirmed that they are physically completely fit to do so.

Fortunately, many bone marrow transplant units in the United Kingdom now prefer to collect bone marrow cells from the blood using a technique that requires no anaesthesia or admission to hospital, and also pro-

vides superior short-term results for the recipient. Blood transfusion services have the facilities in donor centres to enable this procedure to be performed, if absolutely necessary, outside hospital (most bone marrow transplant units would prefer the procedure to be monitored in hospital) or even at home — although I would not recommend this.

Unrelated bone marrow donors, whether members of the Anthony Nolan panel or the British Bone Marrow Registry, are advised, counselled and examined by a physician completely independent of the transplant centre or recipient, enabling them freely to give or refuse their consent.

It is difficult to provide such a neutral environment for family members, but concerned donors such as Susan Squires deserve no lesser consideration of their reasonable fears and anxieties.

Yours sincerely,
IAN FRANKLIN
(Professor of transfusion medicine and consultant,
Bone Marrow Transplant Unit,
University of Glasgow,
Royal Infirmary,
10 Alexandra Parade, Glasgow.
April 19.

Damage to newspapers

From the Chief Executive of The British Library

Sir, The British Library is grateful to Mr W. C. F. Butler (letter, April 15) for having drawn wider attention to the problems we face with the conservation of newspapers.

Newspaper, always on chemically unstable paper, deteriorates quickly and the most effective way of saving its content is through microfilm. Our programme of preservation microfilm is, alas, underfunded and the library has recently bid for additional funds from the Department of National Heritage to permit increased expenditure in a number of areas, including conservation. If the bid is successful we shall be able to microfilm (at a cost of £1.8 million) some 11 million pages of newspaper which are now too fragile to be made available to readers.

The problem of deteriorating newspapers is one of national and indeed international proportion, and the useful co-operative effort to film all British newspapers, known as Newspain, is under way. But this programme, too, lacks sustained funding. An applica-

tion to the Heritage Lottery Fund for support of a national programme for preservation microfilm of newspapers is being drawn up on behalf of Newspain.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN LANG,
Chief Executive,
The British Library,
96 Euston Road, NW1.
April 17.

From Lord Dunboyne

Sir, Mr Butler's plea for a lottery grant to help preserve the gems in the Newspaper Library at Colindale merits careful consideration. But there is little point in microfilm what is verging on the illegible — as, for instance, is demonstrated by the film of the register of marriages recorded at Chelsea Old Church between 1777 and 1865.

A transcript, made by an expert assisted by modern technology, may be the only solution in such cases, however costly.

Yours faithfully,
DUNBOYNE,
36 Ormonde Gate, SW3.
April 16.

'Alcopop' drinks

From the Director of The Portman Group

Sir, Ian Sutherland's belief (letter, April 15) that "alcopops" constitute "a serious threat to the youth of this country" is a dangerously narrow opinion.

Alcopops have certainly established a place within teenagers' drinking repertoire, but the Health Education Authority's recent research confirms that they range only between 3.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent strength, far weaker than the high-strength ciders or wine and spirit-based drinks in double figures which Mr Sutherland quotes as examples of his concerns, and which can hardly be described as "soft drinks with an alcoholic content".

Every credible research study to date indicates that alcopops are a minority choice among teenage drinkers, with premium lagers and strong ciders well in the lead. These are the real dangers among designer drinks, when consumed by those who drink the most and the most often. Their at-

traction is a combination of strength plus a hard, grown-up, masculine image. By contrast, teenage alcopops drinkers tend to be young girls who drink occasionally and at home.

Alcohol manufacturers should comply with the responsible marketing guidelines laid down in *The Portman Group's code of practice*, which helps to ensure that drinks are not aimed, deliberately or otherwise, at those under 18, for example by using cartoon imagery or allusions to illicit drugs.

The code has the support of over 100 companies who produce or sell alcohol in the UK. It also spells out ways in which retailers can improve their compliance with the law prohibiting sale of alcohol to those under 18.

Anyone with a complaint under the code is encouraged to send it to *The Portman Group* where it will be dealt with by an independent panel. I can guarantee that alcopops will not be the only drinks found at fault.

Yours faithfully,
JEAN COUSSINS,
Director, The Portman Group,
2d Wimpole Street, W1.
April 15.

Spelling it out

From Mr Hal Ewing

Sir, Mr N. R. MacNicol (letter, April 16) sees a problem where none exists. There need be no confusion between the dates 2001 and 2021.

OBITUARIES

STEPHAN HERMLIN

Stephan Hermlin, German author, died on April 6 aged 81. He was born on April 13, 1915.

Stephan Hermlin was a leading figure in the literary life of the German Democratic Republic throughout the 40 years of its artificial existence. A Communist by conviction, he never wavered in the beliefs he had formed as a teenager in Weimar Germany, when economic chaos and political confusion lent new urgency to questions about the relationship between life and letters.

Hermlin's enduring commitment both to party and state was rewarded with many honours and he was on friendly terms with East Germany's rulers, from Erich Honecker down. But, for all his willingness to celebrate Stalin, Hermlin was not mere party hack. If his political views were formed in the turbulent years between the First World War and the Nazi assumption of power, so too were his literary ideas.

To the writers in whose shadow Hermlin grew up, from the Expressionists to Brecht and Thomas Mann, social progress and artistic Modernism were not just compatible but inseparably linked. In a State which tended to favour the vulgar certainties of socialist realism in art, Hermlin was a prominent and consistent champion of Modernist ambiguity; and — whether as writer, translator or polemicist — his voice was difficult to ignore. Sincere support for the Communist regime precluded neither private doubt nor public conflict. Furthermore, his convictions did not stop him writing in a way that owed more to the mainstream of the European literary tradition than to any ideological prescription.

Hermlin's best writing — refined, elegiac and spare — was as complex as his personality. The two, in fact, are closely interwoven, though not always in obvious ways. Resistance to Fascism is at the heart of Hermlin's work, and central to his oeuvre is a series of powerful and apparently autobiographical tales. The evoca-



tive pieces in the prose collection *Abendlicht* (Evening Light, 1979), especially, seem drawn directly from his own life and that of his family and fellow anti-Fascists. Yet the life they suggest turns out not quite to have been the life Hermlin lived, and when attention was drawn in 1996 to some serious discrepancies between mundane fact and heroic fiction, a notable scandal ensued.

Hermlin's reputation was undeniably diminished by those revelations, and there were those in the new Germany all too happy to see it so. But he found some prominent defenders, too, and the power of his best work owes nothing to his banal deceptions. He may not have lived quite as he liked to imagine, but his idealism was real, and his life was remarkable enough. He remains an

important figure among modern German writers.

Stephan Hermlin was the pseudonym of Rudolf Leder, born to a Jewish family in Chemnitz. Hermlin's own version of his life, long accepted, gave him an English mother; in fact, she was from Galicia. His father, of Romanian stock, was interned as an enemy alien during the First World War, but went on to enjoy prosperity as a businessman

published in 1945.

Those poems, and others in the collections that followed, dealt with the struggle against Fascism, of which the author's experience was recent and direct. But much of their interest derives from the tension between the vividness of their contemporary content and the melancholy refinement of their classical forms.

Returning to Germany in

during the Weimar years of raging inflation. Hermlin may, however, have exaggerated his parents' wealth, perhaps to emphasise that he was a Communist by choice, not out of envy or class solidarity: a love of elegance stayed with him in later life, but in reality, the family fortunes seem to have fluctuated rather as they moved back and forth between Chemnitz and Berlin.

Hermlin's father did not die in a concentration camp, as was suggested, though he did spend six weeks in Sachsenhausen in 1938 before emigrating in 1939 to England; he died of liver cancer in London in 1947, his widow acquiring British citizenship the following year. The dangers and difficulties faced by the family under the Nazis were real, however. From an early age Hermlin himself had been active in the Communist youth movement, participating in street fights and other illegal activities. In 1933 he had to abandon his Gymnasium education and take up an apprenticeship as a printer.

His parents' efforts to get Hermlin and his siblings to safety bore fruit, and in 1936 he joined his brother and sister in Tel Aviv, where he worked as a bookshop for a while. He left Palestine for France in 1937, intending to fight with the International Brigade in Spain. But his health was too poor to permit the active service he later claimed.

On reaching Paris he worked with German opposition groups, then served with the French auxiliary forces and worked on the land until he was interned in 1942 and narrowly escaped deportation. In April 1943 he managed to escape to Switzerland, where his first volume of poems was published in 1945.

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Returning to Germany in

1945, Hermlin worked in the literary department of Radio Frankfurt. But in 1947 he left Adenauer's Germany for the Soviet-occupied zone, settling in East Berlin, where he joined the Communist Party (the SED) and worked as a writer and editor.

It was in his own work in these early years in East Germany that he came closest to the stereotype of official communist literature, writing poems in praise of Stalin, the October Revolution and the GDR's first president Wilhelm Pieck. But the writers he was translating even then — Shakespeare, Keats, Paul Eluard, Pablo Neruda, Louis Aragon, Robert Desnos — showed his preference for the products of an unfeigned imagination. His radio play *Scardanelli* (1970) dealt with the madness of the poet Hölderlin, another figure whose place in the communist literary canon was far from secure.

The contradictions at the heart of Hermlin's work and private beliefs were equally apparent in some of his public pronouncements, as was his openness to new ideas. They brought him into increasingly frequent conflict with the regime. His own eminence gave him comparative security, but he showed repeated willingness to help writers less likely to be officially indulged. With Stefan Heym he led the protests at the expulsion from the country of the songwriter Wolf Biermann in 1976.

Many East German artists and intellectuals followed Biermann into exile, but Hermlin kept faith with the GDR to the end, and after its collapse he joined the PDS, post-communist successor to the SED. Although willing to admit mistakes, he continued to take pride in communism's achievements and was critical of the new, unified Germany, seeing in it a resurgence of the tendencies that had taken Germany into the abyss a century before.

Stephan Hermlin's first wife died in France in 1941. He married his second wife, a Russian, in 1963. There was a daughter of the first marriage and a son of the second.

SHEILA ROTHWELL



Sheila Rothwell, director of the Centre for Employment Policy Studies at Henley Management College, 1979-96, died of cancer on April 4 aged 61. She was born on August 22, 1935.

SHEILA ROTHWELL made her name in the public domain as a leading pioneer for women's rights. She went on to become an authority on labour problems, industrial relations and resource management in general, with an international reputation in her field.

She was already a respected academic with some experience of industrial relations and women's issues when she joined the Equal Opportunities Commission on its foundation — shortly after the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. She remained with the commission for about three years, at first running its small but influential London office — including the supervision of its press coverage — then moving to its Manchester headquarters as assistant chief executive.

In 1979, however, she moved to Henley as director of its Centre for Employment Studies — which over the next 17 years was to provide her with the perfect vehicle for her talents. A natural teacher and lecturer, she tutored business men from all over the world, while conducting her own research into the changing patterns of labour and personnel management.

She travelled extensively as her reputation grew, visiting all parts of Europe, India, the Seychelles and undertaking two extensive lecture tours of the United States. She also took on a number of other part-time jobs, including membership of Professor Bernard Williams's committee on obscenity and film censorship, 1978-79. In 1988 she was recruited by the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service as an independent expert on equal pay. In 1988 she joined its panel of arbitrators and four years later was appointed deputy chairman of the central arbitration committee.

She joined the Social Democratic Party when it started and was at one time a parliamentary candidate but withdrew because she found it too time-consuming.

Born Sheila Gwendoline Paine, she was the daughter of a bank official. She went from Wyggeston School, Leicester, to Westfield College, London, to read history, then to Cambridge for 12 months' teacher training.

After teaching briefly in London she left for Trinidad in the late 1950s when her first husband Miles Rothwell, a civil engineer, went to work there. She continued to teach in Trinidad and also in Barbados in the early 1960s. But her marriage broke up and she returned to England in 1968 with her two children to start a new career.

Her first post was as a research officer and lecturer in industrial relations at the London School of Economics. She took her master's degree in the same subject and remained at LSE until 1975, when she was made assistant secretary (negotiations) at the National Union of Bank Employees.

Twelve months later she left for the Equal Opportunities Commission — having already worked part-time as a research secretary for the House of Lords Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Bill.

She was chairman of the governors of Henley Tertiary College, 1989-94, and was recently invited to join the council of Queen Mary and Westfield College — an appointment in which she took a special pride.

Her publications included *Labour Turnover in 1980* and numerous contributions to specialist journals.

Aside from her clear and incisive mind, Sheila Rothwell's great strength was her common sense and practicality. Distancing herself from women's politics and feminist extremists, she helped guide the EOC towards attainable objectives and into areas where there was genuine discrimination.

She never lost her sense of humour or femininity, allowing herself to remain a slave to fashion trends and the *couture* — if not to nothing and nobody else. Despite her energy and sociability, she remained an essentially private person. This was reflected in her outside interests, which included opera, the cinema and walking. She tried to see as much as possible of those countries which she visited on business, and recently took up water-colour painting.

She retired from Henley Management College last year to set herself up as a freelance consultant, which she thought would give her more time and allow her to see more of her two grandchildren. But cancer was later diagnosed.

In 1985 she had married her second husband, Graham Reid, a senior civil servant from the Department of Employment. He survives her, together with a son and daughter from her first marriage.

Nature notes

THE first cuckoos are back: they look like bluish-grey hawks but have a distinctive flight, never bringing their wings above the horizontal. A few swifts have also returned, screaming over the houseops, but it will be May before the main body of them are back in Britain. Some robins and blackbirds nested very early this year, and the first fledglings are hiding in the hedges. Linnets are beginning to build their nests in gorse and bramble bushes: the male sits singing on a high spray while the female adds a grass stalk or a feather, then they both fly off rapidly together.

Bluebells are coming out, but most of them are only partly unfurled, and it will be another week before they form sheer carpets of blue in the woods. Along roadside banks

there are clumps of greater stitchwort, or bachelor's buttons: the flowers have five white, notched petals, while the stalks and leaves are thin and tangled. Many trees already have thick foliage, and the buds of oak and ash are beginning to split. Speckled wood butterflies are appearing in woodland glades. They emerge from chrysalids hanging in the grass, and fly low with dappled wings. DJM



Church news

Appointments
The Rev Humphrey Southern, Vicar, Hale, and Diocesan Ecumenical Officer (Guildford); to be Team Rector, Hale w Badshot Lea, same diocese.

The Rev Christopher Sterry, Bishop of Blackburn's Domestic Chaplain; to be Vicar, St Mary and All Saints, Whalley Abbey (Blackburn).

The Rev Cristina Summers, Assistant Chaplain to King Edward School, Wileby; to be Assistant Curate (NSM), Holy Trinity, Guildford (Guildford).

The Rev Susan Turner, Assistant Chaplain, Withington Hospital, South Manchester NHS Trust; to be Chaplain, Burnley Healthcare NHS Trust (Blackburn).

The Rev Neil Tipton, Rector, Frimley; to be also Rural

Dean of Surrey Heath (Guildford).
The Rev Philip Venter, NSM, St Barnabas, Bethnal Green (London); to be Assistant Chaplain in Armenia and Georgia and the Archbishop's Apokrisarios to the Catholics of All Armenians (Europe).

The Rev Sheila Watson, formerly Senior Selection Secretary, Advisory Board of Ministry, Church House, Westminster, and Honorary Assistant, Chelsea Parish Church, St Luke and Christ Church (London); now Adviser in Continuing Ministerial Education (Salisbury).

The Rev David Benge, Vicar, St Leonard, Bootle; to be Curate, St Peter and St Paul, Ormskirk, w special responsibility for Latham Park Chapel (Liverpool).

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The Rev Neil Tipton, Rector, Frimley; to be also Rural

THE NEED FOR ELECTRIC AMBULANCES

Dr Wald held an inquest at Southwark on Saturday on the body of Stephen William Kitchener, a wood sawyer, 63, of High-street, Stratford. Evidence was given that Kitchener had apparently been in excellent health. On Wednesday morning he left home about 6 o'clock to go to his work in Bermondsey, and three-quarters of an hour later Police-constable Lewis, of the City Police, found him lying unconscious on the footway of Tower Bridge. An ambulance was procured and Kitchener was taken to Guy's Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

The Coroner: Being on the City side of the bridge you had the advantage of an electric ambulance. You were able to telephone for it and the ambulance with assistants and all appliances, stimulants, and so forth, were on the scene in a very short period?

Lewis: Yes. Within six or seven minutes, and Guy's Hospital was reached in eight or ten minutes.

The Coroner: That could not have been

ON THIS DAY

April 21, 1913

More than 80 years ago a London jury called for electric ambulances to be operated all over the metropolis. On which side of the Thames an emergency occurred could be vitally important.

was the result of sudden heart failure, and a verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned.

At an inquest on the body of a woman who had fallen down and fractured a leg, and subsequently died in Guy's Hospital from shock, a constable stated that although the accident occurred within a short distance of a hospital it took a quarter of an hour to get the woman conveyed to the institution.

Dr Wald said the case furnished strong proof of the necessity of having electric ambulances provided all over the metropolis.

In returning their verdict of "Accidental death" the jury unanimously expressed the

opinion that electric ambulances should be provided throughout the metropolis, and they requested that communications conveying their views should be forwarded to the various authorities.

MANAGEMENT OF A HOSPITAL

The inquiry into the charges of alleged mismanagement at York County Hospital was continued at York on Saturday by Sir Cooper Perry, M.D., of Guy's Hospital. The charges were brought by Dr. Macqueen and Dr. Shepherd, ex-resident medical officers of the institution.

Dr. Gaynor, of the honorary medical staff, who last October conducted an inquiry into the case of the man Collier who, it was alleged, was removed to the mortuary when still alive, said that, with a view to preventing any such incident in the future, a new rule had been adopted which provided that no certificate should be given in respect of a death without inspection of the body; and that the final stage of laying-out should not be begun until one hour after the entry of the death in the report book.

The Commissioner reminded the witness that the day sister had written a ticket that the man died at 7.30, while they had it in evidence that the night sister had actually been spoken to by Collier at 7.40.



James stands alone in front of banks of Manchester United supporters after one of his errors helped the champions towards victory and, probably, another Premiership title. Photograph: Marc Aspland

James goes from Tomb to doom

Oliver Holt on an England player undermined by loss of confidence

When his torment was just beginning David James could still see the lighter side. He blamed the three goals that he let in against Newcastle United at the beginning of last month on lapses of concentration caused by his addiction to video games such as Tomb Raider. Six weeks further on his season has descended into a series of ghastly tales from the crypt.

His suffering has become such that discussion of Liverpool's defeat by Manchester United on Saturday, the loss that effectively handed the FA Carling Premiership title to United, has been distilled into an examination of two more mistakes by James.

Exposed by the failings of his defence, and particularly Mark Wright, he was powerless to prevent Gary Pallister's first goal thudding into the back of his net. Later in the first half he produced a fine save from Johnsen, but then,

seconds later, rushed from his goal to try to punch away a corner only to see it flicked past him by Pallister.

Later in the first half he brought back memories of the more eccentric moments of his predecessor, Bruce Grobbelaar, when he rushed out of his area to try to clear a bouncing through ball and, hopelessly committed, ended up heading thin air. He escaped, but worse was to come.

So inept was his attempt to push Gary Neville's high, swirling cross out of the path of Andy Cole, a failure that led directly to United's third and decisive goal in their 3-1 victory, that the notion of collective responsibility for such a critical and crushing defeat has been discarded in deference to a tirade of criticism against one man.

The next blow to his confidence may come today when Glenn Hoddle names his squad for England's World Cup match against Georgia on April 30, although Roy Evans,



After abandoning video games such as Tomb Raider, left, and Tekken 2, right, James has fallen on hard times as in Paris earlier this month



After abandoning video games such as Tomb Raider, left, and Tekken 2, right, James has fallen on hard times as in Paris earlier this month



After abandoning video games such as Tomb Raider, left, and Tekken 2, right, James has fallen on hard times as in Paris earlier this month

his manager at Anfield, said that he hoped that James would keep his place. "They don't want to knock him down further," he said.

He had already been branded "James the Worst" after his faltering performance against Paris Saint-Germain in the Cup Winners' Cup semi-final first leg ten days ago and

yesterday he was treated to more of the same. "Calamity James", two newspapers labelled him. "Jessie James" was the version of the one that called him a "cowboy keeper".

The United supporters standing behind the goal where he committed his final *faux pas* were just as cruel, of course. "David James, super-

star," they sang amid their triumphant laughter, "drops more balls than Grobbelaar." When they grew tired of that, they yelled "dodgy keeper" at him over and over again.

James's troubles began early in March when Newcastle United visited Anfield. He had been in such superb form all season that he had forced

himself into the England reckoning and Hoddle had come to watch him. Liverpool won a thrilling match 4-3, but James was at fault for all the Newcastle goals.

Five days later James dropped a free kick away at Nottingham Forest and Ian Woan scored to give his struggling team a draw. James was

still selected to play for England against Mexico last month, but, although he kept a clean sheet, he made a hash of several catches.

Then, against Coventry City at Anfield a week later, he rushed out of his goal to try to catch a corner and could only watch as Dion Dublin gave Coventry a shock win. Four

days after that he was to blame for two of the three goals that gave Paris such a commanding advantage in the Cup Winners' Cup semi-final. Alan Hansen, the former Liverpool defender who played for so long in front of Grobbelaar, said on Saturday night that he thought James should be dropped. "He is transmitting his uncertainty to the rest of the defence," he said. "The problem is that James has been an ever-present in the side for more than two years and Tony Warner, his understudy, is untried.

"In the last two games, I thought he had come out of it," Evans said, "but, as a goalkeeper, when every mistake you make seems to end up in the back of the net, it is difficult. Let's not forget that, for eight months of the season, he was fantastic. You ask other goalkeepers and they will put him up there with the best. It is a matter of now working at his game and keeping at it. It is not a time to go and hide."

Riverside tale, page 30
United triumph, page 31
Steve McManaman, page 31
Rangers wait, page 33

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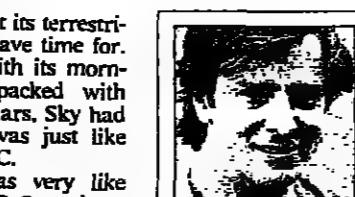
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Scots put accent on memorable soundbites

For the first time in his Sky Sports life, Richard Keys was in danger of underselling an event: "It won't decide where the title is going, but we will have a better idea afterwards." It was accurate rather than memorable and, after a brief flurry of early commercials, somebody decided that Keys could probably do better. "This is the one we have all been waiting for — it's a must-win for Liverpool, it would be a great win for Manchester United." That was more like it — more like Sky anyway.

The morning kick-off that caused havoc with so many domestic arrangements also caused trouble for the satellite broadcaster. Normally, it prides itself on opening up a good hour before kick-off, on giving the sort of comprehensive



MATTHEW BOND
TV ACTION REPLAY

sive build-up that its terrestrial rivals never have time for. On Saturday, with its morning schedules packed with innumerable regulars, Sky had 15 minutes. It was just like watching the BBC.

In fact, it was very like watching the BBC. Sometimes Sky runs into trouble with its policy of having studio guests chosen for their allegiances rather than their eloquence, but for Liverpool v Manchester United, you do not have to look too hard for former players who qualify, more or less, on both counts. Emlyn Hughes and Steve Bruce duly countered through the necessary talking points — Schmeichel's return, Fowler's sending off, James' form — but categorically refused to agree with Keys's somewhat

disingenuous contention that

the championship was still open whatever the result. No, said Hughes, who clearly thought his flagging media profile could be rescued by being forthright: "If United win, it's all over." The rather more amenable Bruce agreed. Keys looked rather disappointed and understandably so. Having the FA Carling Premiership decided on the final day of the season has been big box office for Sky in recent years.

Typically, it was Andy Gray

for the Auto Windscreens Shield final on Sky Sports 3 yesterday afternoon, but Alan Brazil.

The question is, is this because they were all great players, or is it — as William McIlvanney (brother of Hugh) put it a few weeks ago — because of the unique ability of the Scottish accent to make ordinary sentences sound memorable, to add urgency and authoritative conviction to almost anything? Anyone in any doubt only had to listen to Barry Fry's characteristically pithy comments at Wembley yesterday. "What do you think of it?" he was asked. "Not much."

Hansen and Fry combined to similar comic effect in *The Sack Race* on Saturday night, in which Hansen looked at the stresses of football manage-

ment and Fry shouted "Doze on the far post?" a lot and talked about the problems of having to remortgage his house whenever his club was in trouble.

This was a lightweight but enjoyable treatment of a subject that could have sustained a more serious approach. Hansen had called in favours from new and old friends alike and the likes of Ruud Gullit, Kenny Dalglish, Graeme Souness and Bobby Robson duly rolled up and told us... virtually nothing that we did not know already. In the case of Dalglish and Souness, two men who surely know more about the stress of management than anyone, that was unforgivable.

Of Kevin Keegan, the third former Liverpool player to know all about high anxiety, there was no sight.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Kocinski closes in on superbike title

JOHN KOCINSKI of America tightened his grip on the superbike world championship with a victory and a second place in the second round of the series in San Marino yesterday. Kocinski, riding a Castrol-Honda, lost out to Piero Francesco Chilli, of Italy, in the opening race, but dominated the second race and now has a 14-point advantage over Carl Fogarty, of Great Britain, who had to settle for third place in each race.

Michael Doohan maintained his 100 per cent start to the new season by winning the 500cc Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka. Doohan, who won the opening race of the season in Malaysia last week, led a clean sweep by the Honda works team on its home track. Alex Criville, of Spain, finished second with Tadayuki Okada, of Japan, third.

Bedfordshire win title

NETBALL: England captains, past and present, loomed large in the English counties league first division title race, with a former holder of the post, Kendra Slawinski, steering Bedfordshire to a surprise championship win. Essex Metropolitan, meanwhile, captained by Fiona Murlagh, Slawinski's successor, were nudged into second position, with Middlesex third. In the second division, Kent took the title while third-division honours went to Durham North. Gloucestershire and Herefordshire are relegated from the first division, while West Yorkshire and Lancashire drop out of the second division. Tables, page 38.

Ward goes unrewarded

BOWLS: Bill Ward, from the Avon Valley club, took part in two national indoor championships at the weekend with limited success. Avon Valley failed to reach the mixed fours quarter-final at York, an event won by Boston, and Ward then partnered his son, Nick, at the father and son pairs event in Camberley, where they were defeated by Jim and Daran O'Toole, of Wey Valley, the eventual winners.

Yates at the double

CYCLING: Sean Yates underlined his blistering form since he retired from continental racing to compete in British trials again with two victories over the weekend (Peter Bryan writes). He has seven wins from seven starts and yesterday set a record of 51min 3sec in the Elite CC 25 mile event. On Saturday, he won the West Kent ten miles trial in 20min 22sec. Matthew Illingworth was second in both trials.

Arsenal back on top

FOOTBALL: Arsenal went back to the top of the women's premier league with a 4-1 win over Everton yesterday. The victory means that Arsenal, back in front on goal difference, will be close to securing the championship if they defeat Liverpool next Sunday. Broadhurst scored twice, with Arsenal's other goals coming from Yankie and White. Marley scored for Everton.

Close shave for Jansher

SQUASH: Jansher Khan fought back from two match-balls down in the third game to clinch a thrilling *Mutualité Française* Tour title against Rodney Eyles, of Australia, in Bordeaux. The world champion clinched the tie break and went on to defeat Eyles, the world No 2, 12-15, 11-15, 15-14, 15-14. It was the closest Eyles has been to Jansher since beating him in the Hong Kong Open final last September.

Gold goes to Sweden

CURLING: Sweden beat Germany 6-3 to take the gold medal in the men's final at the world curling championships in Berne yesterday. A double take-out across the length of their "house" for four shots at the seventh end gave victory to the Swedes. Scotland won the bronze by beating Canada in the ninth end.

Krajicek starts engine

TENNIS: Richard Krajicek, the Wimbledon champion, overcame frustration with the quality of his service to beat Lionel Roux, of France, 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 in the final of the Japan Open in Tokyo yesterday. "My service is the engine of my game," Krajicek said. In the women's singles final, Ai Sugiyama, of Japan, beat Amy Frazier 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

HOCKEY

High-scoring Aldridge and Poynton taste success

By SYDNEY FRINKIN

THE failure of Birmingham Bullets to reach Wembley to defend their Budweiser championship may provide Nick Nurse with the incentive to return to the club as coach next season. Had Birmingham beaten the play-offs again, the 29-year-old from Iowa may have decided there was no challenge left for him with the club.

"Right now, I think I will be back," Nurse said. After 36 hours of reflecting on the 81-78 loss to Chester Jets in the National Indoor Arena that gave the Jets a 2-1 aggregate win in the quarter-final series. "Good luck to Chester. They were destined to get to Wembley, just like we were destined to be there and win it last year."

The second race was more representative of the Renault's superiority, with Menu winning by 3.187sec. Rydell put a brave face on his third defeat, arguing that his Volvo S40, new for this year, has untapped potential, whereas the Renault Laguna is entering its fourth season.

David Leslie finished third in the first race in his Nissan Primera, an excellent effort for a car in the very early stages of its development.

Menu's team-mate, Jason Plato, who squandered his pole position for the first race by stalling at the start, made amends by securing third in the second event. Robb Gravett, the 1990 British touring car champion, won both rounds of the Total Cup for independent (non-works) entrants on his return to competition in a Honda Accord.

IT WAS worth the wait. After two previous unsuccessful attempts at the women's National League play-offs, Poynton finally triumphed and will join Aldridge in the second division next season, after the two qualified from the five regional winners at Milton Keynes.

Aldridge showed the value of their brief experience in the top flight last season, emerging from their four matches with an unbeaten record. It was a different story, though, for Poynton, who had to wait for the result of the final match between Aldridge and Tulse Hill to determine whether or not they progressed.

With the start delayed for two hours because of a faulty watering system, two late goals, including a penalty corner by Jane Hampshire, put Poynton out of their misery as Aldridge won 2-0.

Cambridgeshire finished second, Somerset third, the Army fourth and Hampshire fifth in this pool. Lancashire, Cheshire and Sussex joined Surrey in the semi-finals in A division after emerging pool winners at Crosby, Telford and Cannock, respectively. Durham, Shropshire and the Royal Air Force, along with Hampshire, will play in the B division next year.

Ireland won the four nations' tournament in Cardiff when Burke scored five goals in her side's crushing 7-0 win against Slovakia yesterday. Wales also finished on a winning note with a comfortable 5-0 victory over Poland, but finished second behind Ireland after losing 4-1 to them on Saturday.

GOLF

Cage holds his nerve to emerge victorious

FROM MEL WEBB IN CANNES

A LESSER man might have buckled under the strain, but they breed them tough in Yorkshire and Stuart Cage, son of Leeds, was not for breaking. There were a couple of bursts of extraordinary scoring from down the field in the final round of the Cannes Open yesterday and pressure, too, from more obvious quarters at the top of the leaderboard, but Cage repelled them all to win with a total of 270, 14 under par.

Cage, 23, had a closing 66 to become the fourth first-time winner on the PGA European Tour this season. He beat Paul Broadhurst and David Carter by five strokes and Jamie Spence and Paul Eales by six.

One of two unexpected challenges came from Spence, who had a 61, ten under par, but was denied a course record by



Cage, the winner by five shots in Cannes, drives an iron down the fairway at the 2nd yesterday

SWIMMING: ERROR ON ENTRY FORM PROVES TO BE COSTLY FOR BRITON

FROM CRAIG LORD
IN GOTTERUENBURG

JAMES HICKMAN had already secured one bonus £5,000 from a sponsor, for winning the 200 metres butterfly title, Britain's first, at the world short-course championships here on Saturday. Yesterday, he celebrated by becoming the first Englishman to swim inside two minutes over the 200 metres medley, his 1min 59.49sec placing him fourth in a closing session that saw Mark Foster win a silver medal and Graeme Smith and Susan Ralph add bronze medals to the British tally.

The former Walker Cup man has had an undistinguished season — before this tournament, he had played eight times, missed five cuts, withdrew with a stomach bug in the South African Open and finished 29th and 37th in the other two.

That is hardly the form of a man who had taken this tournament by the scruff of the neck before the weekend arrived. He must have been wondering when he came to France this week when, and even how, he was going to pull a decent finish out of the bag.

When was yesterday, how was a mixture of straight driving, accurate long-iron play and a dead aim on and around the greens.

Cage, the English Amateur champion in 1992, could not have hoped for a better start. He had three birdies in the first six holes to lead by four strokes. The defining moment of the whole day might have been the 7th, when Eales, playing with Cage in the last group, made a birdie putt and Cage dropped a shot. The short-swing putts Eales within two of the leader.

But the moment soon passed and, although Broadhurst and Eales were briefly one shot behind, when Cage let another shot slip away on the 9th, his inward half was an object lesson in coolness under fire. Four times — on the 10th, 12th, 15th and 16th — he sank putts from a more successful weekend for Dave Calleja, the Stockport coach of Hickman and Smith

— who could have been wearing his own gold medal if British swimming officials had paid more attention to the conditions of entry for the championship.

Smith finished third in the 1,500 metres freestyle in 14mins 46.85sec, a time he recorded several hours before the final heat of what was a heat-declared-winner event. An Olympic bronze medal-winner last year over 1,500 metres, Smith had been forced to swim in a slow heat in the morning instead of the last heat in the evening because his only short-course swim this winter was a slow effort last December. Had he not swum that race, he could have entered with a converted long-course time and would have been placed in the later heat

last night, with Grant Hackett, of Australia, who won in 14min 39.54sec.

"I blame myself. I should have checked the entry form," Calleja said. Smith blamed "well-paid British officials" who "should have looked after our interests". The swimmer, who would also have earned a sponsor's £5,000 bonus had he won the gold, added: "There was just no one to race in the morning."

The British successes were accompanied by the frustration of knowing that had Foster, the silver medal-winner in the 50 metres freestyle, and Ralph, the bronze medal-winner in the 200 metres medley, found their best form, they would be world champions.

As it was, Foster lost out to

MOTOR SPORT

Menu maintains fine start

BY MARK FOGARTY

BY EXTENDING his winning sequence to four at Silverstone yesterday, Alain Menu, the Swiss driver, improved his prospects of finally winning the Auto Trader British Touring Car Championship, in which he has finished runner-up for the past three years.

After his domination of the opening two rounds at Donington Park three weeks ago, Menu was again unchallenged in his Williams-run Renault Laguna, outgunning the Volvo S40 of Rickard

Rydell in both 20-lap, 45-mile races. Rydell, third in the championship for the past two years, was quick to point out that there are still 20 races to go, but Menu's unbeaten start bodes well for his chances.

In two of the past three years, the champion has been the driver who notched up a string of early victories, establishing a buffer that enabled him to protect his points advantage against increased competition later in the series.

In 1994, Gabriele Tarquini, of Italy, established a decisive

lead by winning the first five races, while Frank Biela, of Germany, laid the foundations of his championship success with victories in three of the first four races.

Menu has established a lead of 25 points over Rydell, although the situation is not quite as daunting for the Swede as the figures suggest because a revision to the scoring system this year allows drivers to drop their worst two scores.

In the first race, Rydell, after taking several laps to force his way past his unhelpful team-mate, Kelvin Burt, only just failed to overtake Menu. However, this was more a measure of Menu's calm calculation than a desperate defiance on the run to the flag.

The second race was more representative of the Renault's superiority, with Menu winning by 3.187sec. Rydell put a brave face on his third defeat, arguing that his Volvo S40, new for this year, has untapped potential, whereas the Renault Laguna is entering its fourth season.

David Leslie finished third in the first race in his Nissan Primera, an excellent effort for a car in the very early stages of its development.

BASKETBALL

Nurse may report for duty again

BY NICHOLAS HARLING

THE failure of Birmingham Bullets to reach Wembley to defend their Budweiser championship may provide Nick Nurse with the incentive to return to the club as coach next season.

Had Birmingham beaten the play-offs again, the 29-year-old from Iowa may have decided there was no challenge left for him with the club.

"Right now, I think I will be back," Nurse said. After 36 hours of reflecting on the 81-78 loss to Chester Jets in the National Indoor Arena that gave the Jets a 2-1 aggregate win in the quarter-final series.

"Good luck to Chester. They were destined to get to Wembley, just like we were destined to be there and win it last year."

The two defeats by Chester followed three reverses in the final four games of the regular season. "That run darkened the rest of the season," Nurse said, recalling a sequence of 11 successive wins. "We ran out of gas."

Indeed they did. But for a home defeat by the Leopards three weeks ago, Nurse and not Billy Mills might have been lifting the glass bowl that goes to the champions.

Harry Wrublewski, the Birmingham chairman, has left. Nurse in no doubt that reinforcements will be available if required. "We have an unbelievable sponsorship from Peugeot and crowds. We are financially viable, we must be the envy of every other club in the country," Nurse said.

HOCKEY

Aldridge and Poynton taste success

By A CORRESPONDENT

DANIEL HALL, of Guildford, scored nine goals in two days as Surrey, the holders, reached the semi-finals of the county championship with maximum points from four pool matches at Surbiton.

Surry ended their campaign in the A division yesterday with a 7-1 win against Somerset, who were level at 1-1 at the interval but fell apart in the second half as Surrey took control with Wood of Richmond, scoring three goals. The other scorers for Surrey were Sexton, Tinkler, Hall and Notton, of Surbiton, who finished with a total of seven. Naughty scored Surbiton's goal.

The Army, who avoided relegation with a 3-2 win against Hampshire yesterday, put up a game fight against Surrey on Saturday, but lost 6-3.

Cambridgeshire finished second, Somerset third, the Army fourth and Hampshire fifth in this pool. Lancashire, Cheshire and Sussex joined Surrey in the semi-finals in A division after emerging pool winners at Crosby, Telford and Cannock, respectively. Durham, Shropshire and the Royal Air Force, along with Hampshire, will play in the B division next year.

Ireland won the four nations' tournament in Cardiff when Burke scored five goals in her side's crushing 7-0 win against Slovakia yesterday.

CRICKET

Bowlers fail to advance claims for promotion

By SIMON WILDE

EDGBASTON (third day of four): England A, with seven second-innings wickets in hand, are 144 runs ahead of The Rest

IF THE purpose of the Tetley's Shield match is to act as an opportunity for the most promising players outside the England Test circle to stake their claims for further promotion, it threatens to be only half successful. The batsmen are showing themselves in a good light, but the bowlers are not.

Frustratingly, this confirms where England's strengths and weaknesses are perceived to lie and may leave David Lloyd, the national coach, who is supervising the sides here, with precious little encouragement for the series against Australia. The bowlers have failed to put the ball consistently into the right area, although Simon Brown redeemed a poor first-innings

benefited from a relaxed winter away from the limelight, playing for the University of Western Australia in Perth; now, at 27, it may be time for Rampakash to return to centre stage.

"He played very well and he is maturing as a player," Lloyd said later. "He has performed under pressure as captain and gone out and got a good hundred."

He certainly ensured a miserable afternoon for Chapelle, whose good figures of Saturday were spoilt by nine overs yesterday that cost 62. Chapelle has taken the decision to bleach his hair, in the style of Ian Botham during his Hollywood period.

Perhaps the best batting of the match took place while Rampakash and Warren were taking turns to drive the ball through the off side. Both reached their half-centuries off 90 balls.

On one occasion, Warren took one step down the pitch to Ealham and lifted the ball effortlessly over point for six and it was a shame that he ended his stay so gloriously, mainly steering one of Gallian's gentle seamers into the hands of second slip.

This pair added 101 for the fifth wicket after The Rest had appeared in difficulty at 137 for four. Headley having taken the first two wickets to fall in the day, Silverwood had resumed his nightwatchman duties by thumping the ball for 43 of the first 48 runs before his leg stump was knocked back several yards, while Maddy, who had watched this torment from the other end, was smartly caught by Butcher at first slip.

Rampakash subsequently shared another enterprising century stand with Ben Holloake before declaring at tea, 103 in arrears. Rampakash was unbeaten on 108 after four hours, Holloake on 50 — and, on this reckoning, is a more cultured player than his elder brother and perhaps a less effective one.

Equally perplexing, one or two of the deliveries that he pitched up scuttled through low, suggesting that the pitch is not as benign as the high scoring in the first two innings would imply. There is a green tinge to it and Rampakash, captaining The Rest, did choose to field first, so presumably he thought there was something in it for the bowlers. Edgbaston's reputation for producing unreliable surfaces for the important occasion has not yet been laid to rest.

Rampakash was the chief beneficiary of the bowlers' generosity yesterday. Under pressure to demonstrate that he is capable of succeeding at levels above the county championship, he scored an admirably composed century, technically flawless and full of good strokes. He has clearly



Rampakash on his way to an unbeaten century at Edgbaston yesterday. Hegg is the wicketkeeper

Stephenson century completes tutorial

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

THE PARKS (second day of three): Hampshire, with seven first-innings wickets in hand, are 109 runs ahead of Oxford University

WHAT ON earth was the Oxford stumper, Scrini, up to on Saturday? It was persisting in The Parks and yet all the protection he favoured against the wind, and that only after a sweaterless morning, was the sleeveless sort that cricketers often wear when it is cracking the flags in high summer. It was an extraordinary act, and almost a heroic one.

At this stage of the season, it would be unfair to say that any cricket is pointless — teams have still to be forged in the fire of competition — but there was not much discernible purpose to the proceedings here. Hampshire laboured to 352 for three on a friendly pitch against bowling that aspired to the modest and occasionally reached that mark.

For the Hampshire captain, John Stephenson, it was at least a fresh start. Last year, upon inheriting the captaincy from Mark Nicholas, he mislaid his form utterly and failed to make a century. He duly took a hundred on Saturday, sharing century partnerships with James and Keech, who resumes this morning seven runs short of his own hundred.

If Stephenson keeps a diary,

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Umpires: J. H. Hains and N. A. Melford

his entry on Saturday night would not have detained him long. "Flogged the students," it might have read. Only Averis, who is on Gloucestershire's books and hoping to add a cricket Blue to the one he took in rugby, was up to the task. He has a lively action and took all three wickets to fall.

The first wicket occasioned that exchange of palms known as the "high fives" and, to take a charitable view, it was one way of keeping warm. One would have to be very charitable indeed to account for the Oxford player strolling round the outfield at the tea interval nattering away on a mobile phone. The young always find ways of surprising their elders, but this was a thoroughly disagreeable surprise.

Here's one to ponder in the days ahead. It comes from Edward Pearce, writer on politics and other matters, and who shivered in The Parks on Saturday. "To appreciate cricket, you have to take a long breath."

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Confidence wilts at Riverside Stadium as relegation looms for Robson's expensive team

Middlesbrough plumb new depths of despair

Simon Barnes finds that fatigue and bad luck are leaving an indelible mark

It is all too much. They filed off afterwards, faces drawn, eyes sunk: case studies for students of physical and nervous exhaustion. Observe! See how these two things feed on each other, creating a closed system that brings them ever closer to despair.

Middlesbrough have, in the last couple of weeks, had the Coca-Cola Cup dashed from their lips by Leicester City, first with a late equaliser and then in the replay, with a late winner. They have had a place in the FA Cup Final snatched away, temporarily at least, by Chesterfield with yet another late equaliser.

And now, as they prepare for yet another replay tomorrow, they surrendered three points in this FA Carling Premiership defeat and with it perhaps their place in the top flight. Match after match keeps coming their way, stress after stress. They have five matches left in the Premiership, four of which are away. This was a must-win game. It does not look good.

With their mixture of foreign millionaires and domestic journeymen, they have operated a two-tier system, but not, alas, a team. They have a tyro manager, Bryan Robson — a few months ago considered favourite for the job as England coach — visibly witting in self-confidence and a chairman, Steve Gibson, so besotted with it all that he has broken all precedent and given Robson a vote of confidence without immediately sacking him.

If Dostoyevsky had been employed to write *Roy of the Rovers* — not a very likely scenario, I grant you — he would have written something like the story of Middlesbrough's season: hysterical, pulsating with bewildering events, with false dawns, doubtful triumphs, shocking

disloyalty, still more shocking loyalty, deceptively idyllic moments and a time when the dreadfulness of absolutely everything is spelt out with pedantic clarity — and all the time everything is set about with corrosating moral purpose, though it never becomes quite clear what the corrosating moral purpose actually is.

Saturday's vignette saw Middlesbrough as victim of the managerial master-stroke, Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager, threatened by relegation worries of his own, brought in a 19-year-old — one

Referee didn't help. Chances not going in. Nowhere near all over.

Perish the thought. There is plenty more torture still to come. Would winning the FA Cup and relegation be too unsuable an irony? It has been a long hard season, but the last few weeks will be the longest part, as well as the hardest.

There has been a nobility about this Middlesbrough dream, this Middlesbrough failure, and there has been a crassness, too. It was a noble thing to try to bring the best and most beautiful footballers in the world to Middlesbrough. It was bold and brave and delicious to try to build a new footballing capital of England, a new Jerusalem among the dark satanic docks of Teesside.

But it was crass to think that hurling money at football creates a team, crass to think that a two-tier system would actually work. Chesterfield, Leicester and, on Saturday, Sunderland — all these teams beat or held Middlesbrough because their sum was greater than Middlesbrough's parts. That is exactly as it should be in football, from lowest team to greatest. That was true of teams that I played in, true of teams that Pelé played in.

Middlesbrough, from the moment Juninho stepped on to the turf, established a system in which the parts were greater than the sum. It has been bold, it has been brave, it has been rather wonderful, but the day of reckoning is upon them.

It is still not quite clear what the crime is, but the nature of the punishment is becoming uncompromisingly clear.

MIDDLESBROUGH (4-4-2): B Robson — N Co., N Pearson, S Vickes, D Whyte — P Stimp, Emerson, R Musto, A Moore (sub: J. Jones, 54) — F. H. Benali, M Beck.

SUNDERLAND (4-5-1): L Perez — G Hall, L Hessey, R Ord, M Gray — A Johnstone (sub: A. Rae, 73), D Williams, P Briscoe, K Bell, C Wade (sub: C Russell, 67) — P Stewart. Referee: G Ashby

born and still resident in Middlesbrough, to add to the layers of irony — called Darren Williams to mark Middlesbrough's brilliant Brazilian, Juninho.

But Middlesbrough's brilliant Brazilian was not playing, not from the start anyway. He was resting a poorly knee, lurking on the subs' bench, missing, believed knackered. So Williams played as mere footballer and, as the first half ended, scored the game's only goal.

Waddell stroked a free kick from the edge of the penalty box, about five yards from the

bringing down Beck, but the referee, Gerald Ashby, decided to let him off with a yellow card.

Perez was beaten in the first half when Beck ran onto a neat through-ball from Musto, but struck a post. It was the archetypal sickening thump — a couple of inches further to the right and Middlesbrough's season might have completely changed course.

Robson has perfected a post-match demeanour clearly osing a dead fish as his role model: glassy-eyed, expressionless, a garrish of clichés. Gave a schoolboy goal away.

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Robson has perfected a post-match demeanour clearly

Champions leave rivals in their slipstream in race for Premiership

United remain top of pecking order

Liverpool 1
Manchester United 3

BY OLIVER HOLT
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

ONE marathon began on the pitch at Anfield on Saturday morning as another ended. A lone walker left the centre circle at half-time and started out on a 230-mile trek to the birthplace of Bill Shankly. A little over 45 minutes later, shell-shocked and brought to their knees, Liverpool reached the end of their long day's journey into night.

For three months now, it has been a desperate struggle to stay in touch with Manchester United as the champions hit their stride, the panting, breathless effort of a dogged pursuer who only gets fleeting glimpses of his quarry. On Saturday, though, it

TOP THREE

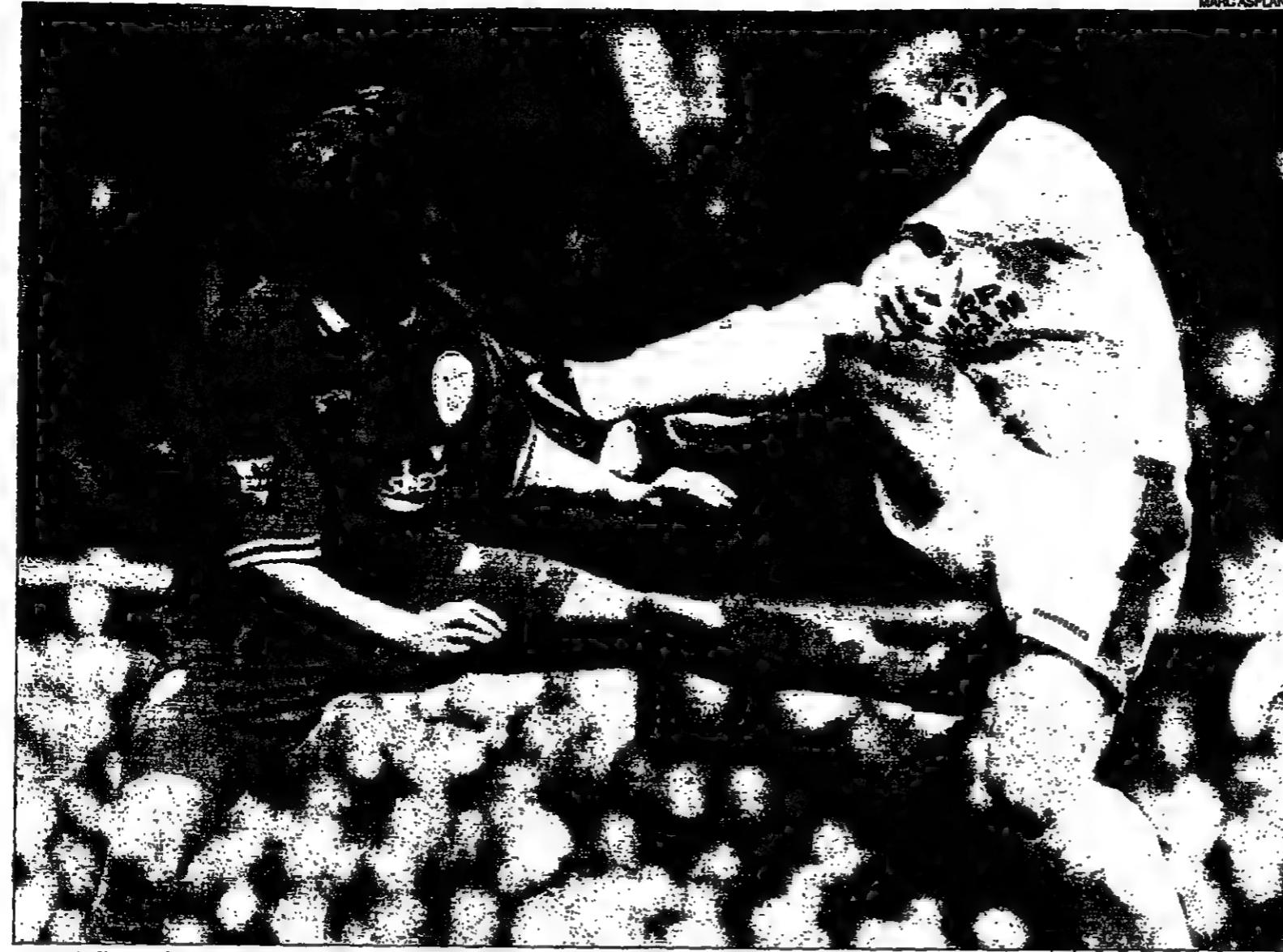
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	24	20	9	5	69	39	69
Arsenal	35	18	10	7	58	29	64
Liverpool	35	18	10	7	58	33	64

MANCHESTER UNITED: May 3: v Leicester (a); May 6: v Middlesbrough (h); May 8: v Newcastle (h); May 11: v West Ham (h). ARSENAL: May 3: v Coventry (a); May 6: v Newcastle (h); May 11: v Derby (a); May 13: v Tottenham (h); May 16: v Wimbledon (a); May 19: v Shefford Wednesday (a).

was like watching a Lancaster bomber tailing a spaceship that suddenly disappears at the speed of light.

The four matches that United have to play in the last eight days of the season at the beginning of next month may not be such a hardship after all. After their victory at Anfield and Arsenal's draw with Blackburn Rovers, United need only five points from those last four games to clinch their fourth title in five years. The week that was to have been an unwanted test of endurance may now be a prolonged victory parade.

"It is a massive result for us," Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, said. "It would be easy for us to fall into traps. We have got games against teams fighting off relegation and games against teams fighting for a place in Europe, so we won't be taking anything for granted, but we know we have to earn the right to be champions."



Split decision: McAlister, left, of Liverpool, tangles in mid-air with Cantona, the Manchester United forward, in the defeat at Anfield.

ons. Liverpool have learnt how hard it is to win leagues over the years and this was the right time to come here and prove that if we do win it, we will be good champions. But we have still got work to do."

The irony of it, perhaps the pity of it, is that United did not need to push themselves to their brilliant best to disappear out of sight of the rest of the FA Carling Premiership. They stood firm and they played professionally, efficiently and with guile and poise as Liverpool self-destructed in front of them.

Keane, who played just in front of the back four and steadied the defence on the rare occasions it looked shaky,

was a titan, as usual, while Butt, just as he had been against Borussia Dortmund ten days ago, was probably the best player on the pitch.

Even some of the Liverpool

players admitted afterwards

that the margin of United's

victory could have been much

more than 3-1, that Gary

Pallister's two thumping head

and Andy Cole's nod down

into an open net from Gary

Neville's hopeful cross were

the minimum return United

were entitled to expect from

the home team's parlous de

fensive display.

In the Liverpool attack,

McManaman and Fowler,

playing his last game before

suspension rules him out for

the rest of the Premiership

shied away from the ball

virtually going through his

arms.

In between, Newcastle were

irresistible. Ferdinand put

them ahead with a trademark

flying header from Elliott's

cross. Shearer was his impos

ing, muscular self, but it was

Asprilla who did most to

undermine Derby's security.

Two weeks ago, during Der

by's win at Old Trafford,

Trollope had man-marked

Cantona to some effect. Man

marking Asprilla was another

master as the Colombian left

him tackling thin air, to the

delight of the crowd.

"He's the one the fans really

get excited about," Dalglish

said, "but he worked back as

well — he lost the ball towards

the end and chased all the way

back to try to retrieve it — so as

well as the flair he's also got a

desire to be successful."

Ah, so that is the Dalglish

revolution — flair plus the

Puritan ethic.

NEARBY UNITED 1-2-3 S Heaps

W. Barton, D. Pollock, S. Watson, J.

Beevers, P. Lee, D. Batty, R. Elliott — F.

Ferguson, A. Shearer, J. McAlister — L.

Freund, A. Shearer, J. McAlister — L.

RUGBY UNION: LEAGUE LEADERS NEED JUST ONE MORE POINT FROM TWO REMAINING GAMES TO CLAIM COURAGE CHAMPIONSHIP CROWN

Tired Sale unable to halt Wasps title march

Wasps 36
Sale 10

BY DAVID HANNS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ONE black-clad Wasps hand is on the Courage Clubs Championship trophy. Admittedly, they must leave their comfort zone at Loftus Road to add another, but one point from their remaining two games, against Northampton on Saturday and Harlequins a week later, will be sufficient to bring the league title back to London, where it has resided only once — at Wasps in 1990.

Now only Bath, the 1996 league winners, can overtake them and that on points difference. Given Bath's resurgent form, they will hope to

Full results and league tables ... Page 38

win their remaining three games, so Wasps must leave the champagne on ice until they have made certain; but their admirable organisation shows no sign of waning, and certainly not against a Sale team flagging badly in their third match in nine days.

It is Sale's turn to look deep within if they are to maintain their impetus up to the Pilkington Cup final on May 10 and sustain their European challenge. Defeat at Loftus Road yesterday pushed them out of the top four in the first division and their tired legs face another game on Wednesday, against London Irish. Thereafter, they must take on Bath and Leicester.

There was no shortage of possession for Sale, but a yawning chasm between them and Wasps in how they used it. Five minutes after the interval devastated the visitors as Wasps increased the pace of the game, drew mistakes from their opponents and ran in

two tries that left Sale, already without Simon Mannix, their injured stand-off half, with a virtually impossible task.

The playing blend Wasps have established over the past 18 months, since the devastation visited on them by the loss to Newcastle of so much experience — Andrew, Ryan, Bates, Childs — is an object lesson for others. Henderson and Logan have settled in comfortably alongside such veterans of the club as White and Greenwood.

"We have been very good at hitting tackles, getting up and making another rather than killing the ball," Lawrence Dallaglio, the captain, said. "Players will concede the ball. The mentality is to dislodge the ball in the tackle and, if we don't, make another tackle."

The stream of penalties that Sale conceded was the sign of a tired side and, with a marksman like Rees opposing them, was like signing their own death warrant. The loss of their own goalkicker, Mannix, with a lower-back injury early in the game was an additional blow, but more for the New Zealander's tactical skills than his points-scoring potential.

Sale's heaviest league defeat of the season started with Mannix kicking a simple penalty, but it was symptomatic of their distress that they promptly let the advantage lapse. From the restart, Mannix delivered a poor and unnecessary pass to Beirn, who knocked on. Morris obstructed at the scrum and Rees, acclaimed by a crowd of 200, levelled the score.

Henderson scored the game's first try, aided by a visit from the Wasps medical staff. The centre collided with Baxendale, but his team-mates sustained the move long enough for Henderson to benefit from the magic sponge and arrive in time to take a tapped penalty and charge over. The Wasps defence, as absorbent as that same



Henderson, with Sheasby in support, leaves Morris, of Sale, grounded as he claims the first Wasps try

sponge, soaked up everything Sale had to offer and then offered them a lesson in tactical appreciation.

Mallinder sliced a clearance and Sheasby gobbed it up; King, whose judgment is becoming more acute game by game, made a half-break and Logan finished gleefully.

Rees' second penalty gave Wasps a 16-3 lead at the interval, but, having taken 40 minutes to achieve so much, they all but doubled their tally in five minutes: Henderson

scythed through and, though Greenstock was penalised in the tackle as Sheasby crossed, Sale contrived to give the ball away and Roiser trotted over.

Three minutes later, King opened the Sale midfield once more and Greenstock pinned back his ears to make the line.

When Rees kicked another penalty, Wasps stood 30 points clear with the final quarter remaining: —

"We are not playing well for the 80 minutes," Nigel Melville, director of rugby at

Wasps, said. "These guys need to improve to keep up the standards they are setting themselves." Yet, at this stage of the season, they look a side that knows where it is going, whereas so many clubs are clinging to the ropes.

Moreover, Wasps had the last word.

Baxendale and Yates created a try for Beirn, but Wasps went straight back downfield and, though Sheasby was held on the line, King dropped his trademark goal from a mere 12 metres.

There is more work to come for Wasps, but they must end the end in sight.

SCORERS: Richmond: Tries: Finday, Patterson, Saracens: Tries: Collett, Frost, Patterson, Saracens: Penalties: Frost, Finday, Richmonds: S Lamb, M Angl, P Patterson, N Colan, H Bullock, S Mills, S Patterson, J Finday, S Dominguez, V Hudson, K Jones, J Sutton, T Scock, J Shears, S Wren. **SARACENS:** M Cave, A Shepherd, P Collett, A De Beaum, W Dowd, A Bonner, E Marshall, S Dwyer, M Hulme, S G O'Farrell, L Burgess, C Green, H Clayton, G Frost, Rees, S Worsley (Nonhants).

BRENDAN CANNON, the Queensland Reds hooker, has been suspended for 15 matches as a result of being cited for stamping on Alistair Murdoch, the New South Wales Waratahs wing, after the Super 12 game between the two teams in Sydney on Saturday, which Queensland won 26-16. Cannon was found guilty of misconduct and dangerous play by an Australian Rugby Union (ARU) judiciary panel, which described his actions as "extremely serious".

Six players in all were cited: the ARU panel decided on suspensions for two other players — Dan Crowley, the Queensland prop, and Richard Harry, the New South Wales prop, who received two and three-match bans respectively. There may yet be a further suspension when the case on Michael Brial, the New South Wales flanker, is reviewed.

The controversy in Sydney overshadowed the magnificent 63-22 victory by Auckland Blues over Gauteng Lions.

Gauteng suffered further when Kobus Wiese, their captain, was taken off with a suspected neck injury and severe concussion.

Bennett kick retains cup for Saracens

Richmond 10
Saracens 13

BY ALISON KERVIN

IT WAS always going to be a closely fought women's Bread for Life Cup final, with Richmond, the 1997 league champions, against Saracens, the holders of the trophy. The 2,000 or so supporters that gathered at the Stoop Memorial Ground yesterday were treated to a thrilling finale.

The match burst into life when Saracens equalised ten minutes before the final whistle, after trailing for much of the match. At 10-10, with the

minutes ticking away, both sides fought even more passionately for possession.

All the hard work was done in the forwards — where the equally-matched packs struggled for the upper hand until eventually, with just seconds left on the clock, Saracens were awarded a penalty in front of the posts and Amanda Bennett, the stand-off half, slotted the ball over to secure the cup.

The teams were closely matched, producing a sometimes turgid, defensive game early on, but some great performances from the backs offered light relief. In this respect, Pogo Patterson, the

Richmond centre, who plays for Scotland, showed speed and vision. Given space, she is dynamic. She scored the second of Richmond's tries by running round her own pack and the Saracens' defence before cutting through to touch down after 30 minutes. Richmond's first try had been scored by Karen Findlay, the captain, who played despite fracturing a rib at a match in Venice a couple of weeks ago. She went over after splendid pressure at a maul.

Collins, the Saracens outside centre, had crossed the line after three minutes, but Saracens made no further impression until Frost, their

scrum-half, scored a try for Saracens.

No B. forced her way over to equalise ten minutes before the whistle.

In the morning, the Student Cup was won by Brunel University, who beat Staffordshire University 48-10, then immediately before the Cup game, Litchfield beat Harlequins 15-10 in the North v South Junior Cup final.

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RUGBY LEAGUE: WOEFUL WARRINGTON SLUMP AS SHORTCOMINGS ARE EXPOSED BY SUPER LEAGUE LEADERS

Ruthless St Helens leave tame Wolves licking their wounds

St Helens 60
Warrington Wolves 16

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

HOW did Warrington Wolves manage to beat Wigan three weeks ago? That fast-fading memory must sustain them in the aftermath of a shame-faced defeat yesterday. Just as the St Helens Super League was beginning to look more competitive, Warrington turned in a performance with haunting overtones of three visits to Knowsley Road last year, when they shipped 200 points.

Asked if he could draw any comfort, Alex Murphy, the Warrington manager, said: "Yes, they didn't get 80." Against moribund opposition, St Helens could not help but be merciless in cherry-picking their tries.

The margin of St Helens' win puts them ahead of Bradford Bulls at the top of the table on points difference, but victory had its price. Alan Hurne tweaked a hamstring scoring his fifteenth try of the season and Chris Morley was put on report for an alleged high tackle and now has a nervous wait, 12 days before the Challenge Cup final.

Warrington's problems are serious and long-term. After his third game in charge,

Darryl van de Velds said the defeats of Oldham Bears and Castleford Tigers had disguised certain deficiencies. These were not so much exposed by St Helens, as left bare by Warrington themselves, in giving up on the basics of tackling, passing and support play.

It was the biggest defeat of Van de Velds' coaching career. When Bobby Goulding converted the last St Helens try, it overtook the Wolves' 58-20 thrashing away to Bradford on the opening day as the heaviest defeat in the league this season.

Although he scored only one try, Paul Newlove, on his return from injury, was irresistible in carving open Warrington's

Karle Hammond, too, scored just one try, but he laid on three more in another impressive showing at loose forward. Only when Newlove was in the sin-bin for a professional foul did Warrington score after they had gone 32-0 down in 28 minutes.

Hurne's opening try, after which he pulled up in obvious pain, was an ominous sign of Warrington's visible defence. O'Neill plunged over from short range and three players caught and then lost Martyn. Newlove fended off three weak challenges to put Sullivan away.

Two tries by Forster and another by Vagana were scant consolation, as Martyn scampered over for his second. Before the final try by Anderson, Prescott, Haigh and Norrey scored and Goulding made it eight successes from 12 goal attempts.

SCORERS: St Helens: Tries: Martyn, P. Newlove, O'Neill, Sullivan, Haigh, Anderson, Goulding (2), Vagana. Penalties: Forster (2), Vagana. Warrington: Tries: Martyn, A. Hurne, K. Conaghan, J. O'Neill, E. Jones, C. Morley, N. Hammond. Substitutes: A. Haigh, V. Mikula, A. Norrey, P. Anderson. Warrington: W. Vagana, P. Hurne, T. H. Jones, J. Roper, A. Forster, K. Sherrard, B. Anderson, P. Hurne, G. Chambers, T. Talupa, G. Mann, P. Sculthorpe. Substitutes: J. Knott, C. Rudd, P. Fruin, P. Dubray.

Referee: R. Smith (Castleford)



Hurne: hamstring injury

Tigers' tale of woe continues

CASTLEFORD Tigers were left rooted to the bottom of the Stones Super League after losing 26-12 at home to Halifax Blue Sox yesterday.

Martin Pearson, the Halifax centre, did most of the damage, claiming 16 points with a try and six goals in Castleford's eighth successive defeat.

Stuart Raper, who takes over as Castleford coach on Thursday, will have his work cut out to keep his team in the Super League, on the evidence of this match. The only time that they looked to be in the game was when Dean Sampson scored a fine try to level the scores following an early try from Damien Munro.

Halifax twice scored tries when they had a man in the sin bin, first through Gillespie and later through Pearson. Moana also scored a try for Halifax, picking up a loose ball and shrugging off a tackle to cross from 20 metres. Castleford at least had the consolation of a late try from Vowles.

Hull established an early advantage in the race to win promotion to the Super League when they beat Huddersfield 26-4. The win ended Huddersfield's 100 per cent record.

Oldham bear brunt of Wigan backlash

Wigan Warriors 44
Oldham Bears 10

BY A CORRESPONDENT

WIGAN Warriors will not be reading too much into this Stones Super League victory over an Oldham Bears side that did much to bring about their own heavy downfall, but, after successive home defeats by St Helens and Bradford Bulls, this was still a badly-needed win to restore fragile pride.

Eric Hughes, the Wigan coach, while happy with the big win, said: "We are still on a learning curve, but we are improving week by week." With players such as Gary Connolly and Andy Farrell to guide them, the new faces in the side will not go too far wrong.

Oldham have only one win this season and their only comfort yesterday was that they provided the highspot of a dour first half — a sparkling try from Stephenson, after a high kick by Maloney was gathered by Gildart and five players combined in an intricate move that was completed by Stephenson's touchdown.

Wigan had made hard work of breaking down a resolute Bears defence and 20 minutes of battering-ram tactics came

Bath blossom after winter of discontent

Bath 40
Orrell 14

BY NICOLAS ANDREWS

BATH may retain a mathematical chance of winning the Courage Clubs Championship first division title this season, but these are two sides whose attention is already focused beyond the present campaign.

"Next season started today," Sammy Southern, the director of rugby at Orrell, said after watching his side go down by six tries to two, for Bath, it might well have been running for a week already.

The demolition of Leicester last week meant a great deal to the champions. After a winter of not inconsiderable discontent, they proved that they still have what it takes.

Andy Robinson, the club coach, compares this season with that of 1987-88, when the Bath team in which he played also won nothing. They did not make the same mistake for a decade.

"This season will help us in the learning process over the next five years," Robinson said. "We're winners; losing is not enjoyable, but you learn from it. It will help us to develop the necessary spirit and attitude."

Bath have been accused this season of destroying the hardened attitude and close-knit team spirit that had served them so well for so long. Robinson accepts that mistakes have been made — there will be no more short-term signings from rugby league, no more squad system in which players take it in turns to have the afternoon off — but he remains confident that the future will be bright.

International arrivals such as Dan Lyle, the United States Eagle, and Federico Méndez and German Llanas, from Argentina, are settling in, he learnt what it means to belong to the Bath family and the team is the stronger for their presence. Jim Blair is joining as full-time fitness coach from Auckland and will add an important southern hemisphere perspective.

"I can't wait for next season to start," Robinson said. "The benchmark was set last week to take our game on further."

It was never going to be easy on this chilly Saturday to repeat the performance that accounted for Leicester, albeit against an Orrell side now doomed to relegation. The visitors tackled bravely throughout and, while outgunned up front, never gave up.

"I never thought I would congratulate a team that's just been beaten," Southern said.

"but I congratulated them today. In the best interests of the club, we need to go into the second division."

"We've got to sort the structure of the club out, strengthen the side and come back. There's a lot of talent in our part of the world. We've got to make sure we keep it."

Robinson is just as anxious to hang on to players who have been linked with possible moves. John Mallett, it seems, is not going to Richmond and Worcester will have their work cut out to lure Jonathan Callard away as player-coach.

"There's an offer there. There has to be some serious talking on all sides, but I am concentrating on Bath at the moment," Callard said.

The full back's fourth-minute try gave Orrell just the start that they did not need. Peters scored the first of his two tries from Catt's inside pass with 20 minutes gone and Méndez added the third before the break.

Lyon, the stout-hearted Orrell captain, carved his way through the Bath defence to



RACING: STOUTE KEEPS TRUMP CARD UP HIS SLEEVE AS STAKES ARE RAISED FOR 2,000 GUINEAS

Run on Entrepreneur gathers pace

BY RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

RATHER like the dog that did not bark in the Sherlock Holmes story, the Pertemps 2,000 Guineas, in 12 days' time, is fast revolving around the horse that did not run in last week's classic trials at Newmarket and Newbury.

The victory of the Michael Stoute-trained Yalaiteanet over Revoque in the Greenham Stakes on Saturday, which followed the stable's success with Desert Story in the Craven Stakes, only served to focus attention on Entrepreneur. After a recent avalanche of money, he is now 7-2 favourite with Victor Chandler and a best-priced 5-1 with Ladbrokes and the Tote.

Mike Dillon of Ladbrokes summed up the mood yesterday. "The key horse is Entrepreneur now because Michael Stoute holds all the cards. It is looking increasingly like a rerun of 1989 and the Nashwan situation where an untrained horse forces its way through, no matter what happens in the big trials."

The winter hype about Entrepreneur, who is also a clear 6-1 favourite for the Derby, received a fresh boost at the weekend when Greville Starkey, a key member of the Stoute team, was reported as



Yalaiteanet, centre, gets the better of Revoque in a close finish to the Greenham Stakes at Newbury on Saturday

saying that Desert Story would not be able to live with Entrepreneur. His view is shared privately by others within the Stoute stable.

The trainer, in ebullient mood yesterday after a most satisfactory week, is anxious to play things down. "I don't know why Greville suddenly got excited like that. He's usually quite strewd."

Michael Tabor who, along with John Magnier of Coolmore Stud, paid 600,000 guineas for the Sadler's Wells colt as a yearling, is trying not to let the excitement get to him. "We have got Deserts Not Words running at Keeneland today and he could go for the Kentucky Derby which is on the same day as the 2,000 Guineas," he said from his Monte Carlo base yesterday.

"Nevertheless, I have made no secret of the fact Entrepreneur is a horse that has always excited me. He is brimful of promise." That is akin to saying Tiger Woods has the ability to win the odd golf tournament.

Michael Tabor who, along

with John Magnier of Coolmore Stud, paid 600,000 guineas for the Sadler's Wells colt as a yearling, is trying not to let the excitement get to him. "We have got Deserts Not Words running at Keeneland today and he could go for the Kentucky Derby which is on the same day as the 2,000 Guineas," he said from his Monte Carlo base yesterday.

"I love the Kentucky Derby; the atmosphere is electric, but now there is all this hype about Entrepreneur. With all Michael's horses running so well it is building up into a crescendo. Michael is a professional and doesn't want people to get carried away. He's very low key about it, but we all know he thinks he is a very good horse. Is he the best?

I don't know, but somebody obviously thinks he is."

Robert Sangster hopes — even believes — he isn't. Revoque's owner was far from downcast after last season's top two-year-old just lost out to Yalaiteanet in a driving finish on Saturday. The winner, who looked fitest of the six runners, is likely to go for the French or Irish 2,000 Guineas.

Revoque really caught the eye in the parade ring before the Newbury race but looked as though he would be better for the run. "The bookmakers should make us 8-1 and then we would go in again," Sangster, somewhat tongue in cheek, said, having taken the 11-2 on offer earlier in the week.

"Peter [Chapple-Hyam] said beforehand that Revoque would not be fully fit today and I think this race will bring him on enormously. I would like to think he will improve five or six pounds. If I was a bookmaker I would make him 3-1 favourite."

Sangster remains the market leader with most layers. The once-raced Chesham Stakes winner is trained in Dubai by Godolphin and, like Mark Of Esteem, their 2,000 Guineas winner 12 months ago, will arrive at Newmarket days before the classic — without a run this season.

Double Thriller gives Wilkins glimpse of future

POINT-TO-POINT BY CARL EVANS

THERE will be life after Double Silk at Reg Wilkins's two-horse Mendip home. His seven-year-old stable-companion Double Thriller stated as much when winning the Lady Dudley Cup at the Worcester steeple meeting on Saturday.

Double Silk elevated his owner-trainer's name to come into usage in racing circles, primarily through a luckless attempt on the 1994 Grand National but also with his domination of hunt racing at that time. Age dictates that this could be the 13-year-old's last season.

It had been easy to assume that Wilkins would ride quietly out to pasture too, but Double Thriller halted those thoughts when winning the centenary of one of Britain's most prestigious point-to-points.

The form is questionable, since five-year-old Zambrano, who had been fourth in an intermediate race on his previous start, hustled up the winner and finished second, ahead of Yorkshire challenger Peanuts Pet. Yet Double Thriller was taking part in only his fifth race and looks every bit as imposing as his illustrious stable-companion. The odds-on favourite. Still In

Business, ran a shocker and was beaten four fences out.

Racing's ability to offer challenges to all was neatly personified in the winner's enclosure as Wilkins, small and 70, congratulated his six-foot teenage jockey Joe Tizzard. The winning rider said: "I looked over my shoulder on the final turn in case there was anything waiting to beat me for speed, but my horse never felt like he would stop."

Ron Trelogeon missed the ride, having suffered a broken wrist, but he hopes to be back in time to ride Double Silk and Double Thriller, both sons of Dubassoff, at Cheltenham's evening hunter chase meeting later this month.

Julian Pritchard is still defining the logic which suggests only a rider attached to a big yard can win a national riding championship. A double with Stag Fight and Hackets Farm took him to 21 victories this season, four ahead of Jamie Jukes and Tim Mitchell on Saturday night.

Pip Jones made a strong surge for the women's title with a treble at the Penyrich, which put her one behind Shirley Vickery and the injured Polly Curting. The odds-on favourite. Still In

NOTTINGHAM

THUNDERER

2.10 Skys Flyer 4.10 Corradini
2.40 Gunners Glory 4.40 Midyan Blue
3.10 Tymreera 5.10 Polycatular
3.40 General Sir Peter 5.40 The Deejay

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 3.0 General Sir Peter, 4.10 CORRADINI (nap), 4.40 Midyan Blue.

GUIDE TO OUR RACECARD

103 (13) 0-042 6000 TIMES 74 (02/F, F, S) (Mrs D Robson) Hail 9-10-0, B West (4) 88

Racecard number. Days in brackets. Shaded row: 1st — 2nd — 3rd — 4th — 5th — 6th — 7th — 8th — 9th — 10th — 11th — 12th — 13th — 14th — 15th — 16th — 17th — 18th — 19th — 20th — 21st — 22nd — 23rd — 24th — 25th — 26th — 27th — 28th — 29th — 30th — 31st — 32nd — 33rd — 34th — 35th — 36th — 37th — 38th — 39th — 40th — 41st — 42nd — 43rd — 44th — 45th — 46th — 47th — 48th — 49th — 50th — 51st — 52nd — 53rd — 54th — 55th — 56th — 57th — 58th — 59th — 60th — 61st — 62nd — 63rd — 64th — 65th — 66th — 67th — 68th — 69th — 70th — 71st — 72nd — 73rd — 74th — 75th — 76th — 77th — 78th — 79th — 80th — 81st — 82nd — 83rd — 84th — 85th — 86th — 87th — 88th — 89th — 90th — 91st — 92nd — 93rd — 94th — 95th — 96th — 97th — 98th — 99th — 100th — 101st — 102nd — 103rd — 104th — 105th — 106th — 107th — 108th — 109th — 110th — 111th — 112th — 113th — 114th — 115th — 116th — 117th — 118th — 119th — 120th — 121st — 122nd — 123rd — 124th — 125th — 126th — 127th — 128th — 129th — 130th — 131st — 132nd — 133rd — 134th — 135th — 136th — 137th — 138th — 139th — 140th — 141st — 142nd — 143rd — 144th — 145th — 146th — 147th — 148th — 149th — 150th — 151st — 152nd — 153rd — 154th — 155th — 156th — 157th — 158th — 159th — 160th — 161st — 162nd — 163rd — 164th — 165th — 166th — 167th — 168th — 169th — 170th — 171st — 172nd — 173rd — 174th — 175th — 176th — 177th — 178th — 179th — 180th — 181st — 182nd — 183rd — 184th — 185th — 186th — 187th — 188th — 189th — 190th — 191st — 192nd — 193rd — 194th — 195th — 196th — 197th — 198th — 199th — 200th — 201st — 202nd — 203rd — 204th — 205th — 206th — 207th — 208th — 209th — 210th — 211st — 212nd — 213rd — 214th — 215th — 216th — 217th — 218th — 219th — 220th — 221st — 222nd — 223rd — 224th — 225th — 226th — 227th — 228th — 229th — 230th — 231st — 232nd — 233rd — 234th — 235th — 236th — 237th — 238th — 239th — 240th — 241st — 242nd — 243rd — 244th — 245th — 246th — 247th — 248th — 249th — 250th — 251st — 252nd — 253rd — 254th — 255th — 256th — 257th — 258th — 259th — 260th — 261st — 262nd — 263rd — 264th — 265th — 266th — 267th — 268th — 269th — 270th — 271st — 272nd — 273rd — 274th — 275th — 276th — 277th — 278th — 279th — 280th — 281st — 282nd — 283rd — 284th — 285th — 286th — 287th — 288th — 289th — 290th — 291st — 292nd — 293rd — 294th — 295th — 296th — 297th — 298th — 299th — 300th — 301st — 302nd — 303rd — 304th — 305th — 306th — 307th — 308th — 309th — 310th — 311th — 312th — 313th — 314th — 315th — 316th — 317th — 318th — 319th — 320th — 321st — 322nd — 323rd — 324th — 325th — 326th — 327th — 328th — 329th — 330th — 331st — 332nd — 333rd — 334th — 335th — 336th — 337th — 338th — 339th — 340th — 341st — 342nd — 343rd — 344th — 345th — 346th — 347th — 348th — 349th — 350th — 351st — 352nd — 353rd — 354th — 355th — 356th — 357th — 358th — 359th — 360th — 361st — 362nd — 363rd — 364th — 365th — 366th — 367th — 368th — 369th — 370th — 371st — 372nd — 373rd — 374th — 375th — 376th — 377th — 378th — 379th — 380th — 381st — 382nd — 383rd — 384th — 385th — 386th — 387th — 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513th — 514th — 515th — 516th — 517th — 518th — 519th — 520th — 521st — 522nd — 523rd — 524th — 525th — 526th — 527th — 528th — 529th — 530th — 531st — 532nd — 533rd — 534th — 535th — 536th — 537th — 538th — 539th — 540th — 541st — 542nd — 543rd — 544th — 545th — 546th — 547th — 548th — 549th — 550th — 551st — 552nd — 553rd — 554th — 555th — 556th — 557th — 558th — 559th — 560th — 561st — 562nd — 563rd — 564th — 565th — 566th — 567th — 568th — 569th — 570th — 571st — 572nd — 573rd — 574th — 575th — 576th — 577th — 578th — 579th — 580th — 581st — 582nd — 583rd — 584th — 585th — 586th — 587th — 588th — 589th — 590th — 591st — 592nd — 593rd — 594th — 595th — 596th — 597th — 598th — 599th — 600th — 601st — 602nd — 603rd — 604th — 605th — 606th — 607th — 608th — 609th — 610th — 611th — 612th — 613th — 614th — 615th — 616th — 617th — 618th — 619th — 620th — 621st — 622nd — 623rd — 624th — 625th — 626th — 627th — 628th — 629th — 630th — 631st — 632nd — 633rd — 634th — 635th — 636th — 637th — 638th — 639th — 640th — 641st — 642nd — 643rd — 644th — 645th — 646th — 647th — 648th — 649th — 650th — 651st — 652nd — 653rd — 654th — 655th — 656th — 657th — 658th — 659th — 660th — 661st — 662nd — 663rd — 664th — 665th — 666th — 667th — 668th — 669th — 670th — 671st — 672nd — 673rd — 674th — 675th — 676th — 677th — 678th — 679th — 680th — 681st — 682nd — 683rd — 684th — 685th — 686th — 687th — 688th — 689th — 690th — 691st — 692nd — 693rd — 694th — 695th — 696th — 697th — 698th — 699th — 700th — 701st — 702nd — 703rd — 704th — 705th — 706th — 707th — 708th — 709th — 710th — 711th — 712th — 713th — 714th — 715th — 716th — 717th — 718th — 719th — 720th — 721st — 722nd — 723rd — 724th — 725th — 726th — 727th — 728th — 729th — 730th — 731st — 732nd — 733rd — 734th — 735th — 736th — 737th — 738th — 739th — 740th — 741st — 742nd — 743rd — 744th — 745th — 746th — 747th — 748th — 749th — 750th — 751st — 752nd — 753rd — 754th — 755th — 756th — 757th — 758th — 759th — 760th — 761st — 762nd — 763rd — 764th — 765th — 766th — 767th — 768th — 769th — 770th — 771st — 772nd — 773rd — 774th — 775th — 776th — 777th — 778th — 779th — 780th — 781st — 782nd — 783rd — 784th — 785th — 786th — 787th — 788th — 789th — 790th — 791st — 792nd — 793rd — 794th — 795th — 796th — 797th — 798th — 799th — 800th — 801st — 802nd — 803rd — 804th — 805th — 806th — 807th — 808th — 809th — 810th — 811th — 8

It's fast, it's furious and even the Queen loves watching it. Christian Dymond takes a look at horseball

Horsing around with a ball



Slam dunk: horseballers out of the saddle as they grapple for goal

You do not need the physique of a television Gladiator to play horseball, but there are similarities. A short blast of *Another One Bites the Dust* is traditionally played over the loudspeakers after every goal is scored in this high-adrenaline sport.

Horseball is rugby, basketball and horse riding rolled into one, a French sport imported six years ago attracting increasing numbers. "The French invented it as a way of improving riding skills and then found it was a great game to play in its own right," says Jim Copeland, the chairman of the British Horseball Association.

Mr Copeland plays for North London, one of several clubs which took part in a pre-season practice day at Warwickshire College, Moreton Morrell, near Warwick. The Ashford Arena at the college was the venue for horseball's first league championship at the weekend.

"It's fast, exciting, tremendous fun and a great team sport. You can be an average rider and still get huge enjoyment out of the game," says Jane Bradwell, who plays for Trevali Valley seniors and the British women's team. "The club's under-16 team took on Cotswold Vale juniors, who come from a pony club in Cheltenham, in the second match of the day.

Horseball is almost always played indoors, on a pitch about 60 metres long and 20 metres wide. The touchline at Moreton Morrell was marked by inflated yellow tubes. The goals, elevated metre-wide hoops at each end, face outwards, rather than upwards as in basketball, and are slightly lower for the juniors. Teams consist of up to six players but only four from each side take the field at any time.

Each game at Moreton Morrell was preceded by competitors cantering around the arena and then lining up across the pitch to face the audience for an introduction by the commentator. The crowd duly applauded each player as their name was announced.



Rugby, basketball and horse riding rolled into one: horseball is a high-adrenaline sport originally designed in France as a way of improving riding skills

At the kick-off (or first pick-up) the team without the ball turns away from the opposition and faces its own goalmouth. This is because tackling head-on is considered extremely dangerous, so whenever players try to gain possession they must approach their opponents from behind.

This usually means that riders and horses on both sides are travelling in the same direction, giving an impression of cowboys heading off at high speed to round up some imaginary cattle.

From a distance, the ball resembles a model of Saturn, with a number of rings around it. In reality, it is a small football with a harness and six leather handles attached.

Players use the handles to pick up the ball and give them something to get hold of when they are trying to wrench it from an opponent's grasp. At Moreton Morrell,

one of the handles came off during a tussle, indicating how fiercely the games were being contested.

Despite the sport's energy and vigour, Mr Copeland maintains that it is extremely safe. "The welfare of the horse is absolutely paramount," he says. Rules dictate that you can play the ball but not the man — and obviously not the horse.

There are yellow cards for player cautions and red ones for sending-off.

At the start of each game the ball is placed on the ground in that half of the pitch belonging to the team "kicking-off". Their players face the ball — two on each

side of it — and then the first rider sets off to pick up the ball.

If he or she fails to do this, another player has a go. The ball must always be picked up on the move. It's no good stopping your horse, bending down and grabbing hold of it that way.

The most important piece of equipment, therefore, is the belly strap which goes underneath the horse and over the stirrups together. This enables players to lean over in the saddle without fear of falling off, although that does occasionally happen.

Once someone has the ball in their hands, it must be passed between at least three different players without it being dropped before someone can take a shot at goal. This leads to the much-repeated scene of the team in possession conducting a tactical retreat to their own half to regroup and pass between the obligatory number of players before heading upfield again.

Nobody can hold on to the ball for longer than ten seconds and, should it go to ground, the "chair" referee sitting on the touchline keeps count again of the number of passes between players.

Rugby-style lineouts are taken with two horses from each side when the ball goes out of play and when a team re-starts the match after a goal.

Substitutions can be made whenever required during a break in play in the 20-minute game and each team can call one timeout in each half, a 30-second break which provides an opportunity for a quick

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

THE BHA is holding four league championship weekends this season. Clubs are divided into small leagues for the first day, followed by a knock-out competition the next. The second championship weekend is at Homestead Farm, Elmstone Hardwick, near Cheltenham (June 7 and 8, 10.30am-4pm). Admission is free. An exhibition will also be given during the Royal Windsor Horse Show (May 14-15). For juniors, horses of up to 14.2 hands only are allowed, for seniors 15-16.2 hands. Standard riding equipment is required, plus the belly strap, which costs up to £20. A standing martingale (about £25) stops the heads of rider and horse clashing. The horses have leg bandages in team colours and over-reach boots above the hooves. Bandages with soft shimpads and over-reach boots cost £15-£25 for the lot. A ball harness is £50-£60 and the ball £10-£15.

• BHA: 0181-441 1749

tactical chat. Half-time lasts three minutes and was marked at Moreton Morrell by the commentator asking over the loudspeaker: "Can we have some horse-walkers please?"

So, while the players had a rest the horses were exercised to prevent them cooling down too rapidly.

Through a personal communication system, Annette Clements, chair referee at Moreton Morrell, talked almost non-stop to the mounted referee on the pitch. With their headphones and radio microphones, the mounted officials resembled rock stars in concert.

Played at speed, horseball is a tremendously exciting spectator sport. As an attacking team bear down on goal the defenders do their best to rip the ball out of their hands or simply crowd them out to prevent them passing or shooting.

The sudden spurts and rapid stops make for a game that is constantly ebbing and flowing. Quite often the players are riding using their legs only.

There are about 450 horseball clubs in France, and fewer than 20 in Britain. But at Moreton Morrell was talking of the interest it is creating, among women and men.

Tony Gubb, one of the mounted referees and coach to Woodspring, near Bristol, has just started teaching horseball at Millfield School in Somerset. "Within three weeks I had 43 students take it up," he says.

A horseball exhibition will be given next month at the Royal Windsor Horse Show. At a similar display last year, the Queen asked Mr Copeland if she could watch more of it in the evening. "This game will happen in a big way here," he promises.

Best of British prepare to meet world elite on ten-dance stage

Ruth Gledhill on two young couples who have ambitions beyond national titles

Britain's leading ten-dance exponents, Darren Bennett and Ruth Coster, face some of the most demanding contests of their careers in the coming weeks. Next weekend, the Sheffield couple fly to Paris to represent England in the world ten-dance championships and then return to Britain to face a strong challenge from the England No 2 couple, Stephen Systum and Katie Lagden. In May, they face Systum and Lagden again, along with the world's best dancers, at the Open British championships in Blackpool.

At Birmingham, in a championship organised by Stan Page and Beryl Holland, ten-dancing is, for the first time, to figure in a chart, or league table, under the auspices of the English Amateur Dance Association. The chart will be used to determine who represents England abroad in future international events.

Bennett, 20, and Coster, 18, suffered a convincing defeat at the hands of Systum, 18, and Lagden, 21, in Southampton two weeks ago at a fund-raising invitation amateur competition organised by the former world champion, Stephen Hillier, in an attempt to inject new cash into youth dancing. Systum and Lagden showed a clean pair of heels to Bennett and Coster in a contest across the five Latin dances only, the area in which Bennett and Coster are traditionally strongest.

However, Bennett, labouring with a cartilage injury, almost did not dance at all and many put their surprise defeat in Southampton down to his knee, which is now all right again after a week in a sports injuries clinic.

Bennett partnered Coster when she was just four after he had asked her to dance at his father's studio in Sheffield. This makes them the longest-serving amateur partnership in the country.

Systum, who started out with Peggy Spencer but now goes to

several former champions, including Richard Gleave, Robert Groves and Anthony Hurley for modern, and Michael Stylianos and Lynn Hartman for Latin, is hoping that he and Lagden can become world professional champions simultaneously in Latin and modern, a feat achieved only once before, by Bill and Bobbie Irvine at the Albert Hall in 1968.

You have to be very fit

indeed to achieve this," Bill Irvine said. "You have to get to another level of fitness beyond that required for ballroom or Latin alone. I had to do a lot of exercise outside the ballroom. A lot of people don't realise that and start to fade when they get to the sixth dance."

Most couples specialise in either the five Latin dances of cha-cha, samba, rumba, paso doble and jive, or the modern dances of waltz, tango, foxtrot,

GILL ALLEN

quickstep and Viennese waltz. The cost — separate coaches are needed for each discipline and lessons can be as much as £45 for 45 minutes — and the time needed for training can make the ten-dance field a daunting prospect for all but the most determined.

Bennett, who is trained by Sammy Stopford, Doreen Freeman and Michael and Vicki Barr, is helped by a £1,200 Sports Council grant.

Lagden is sponsored by Elaine Gornall, who also designs the dresses for the world champion, Karen Hilton. Both couples work out on the dance floor for three hours daily and, like most British amateurs but unlike many of their foreign counterparts, all four are in full-time employment or further education.

John Leach, associate editor of *Dance News*, does not underestimate the difficulty for a British couple to make it to the top in the world ten-dance league. "We really have not been in the running on the amateur ten-dance scene for ten years," Leach said. "Our couples tend to specialise because of the difficulties in training to keep ten dances at a world-class standard."

The benefit of this approach has been the emergence of modern amateur champions such as Christopher Hawkins and Hazel Newberry, or the reigning world professionals, Karen and Marcus Hilton, who were former amateur Latin champions before switching to modern.

Led by Hillier and his wife, Lindsey, who have formed the British Dance Sport Foundation, moves are already afoot to inject more cash into youth and junior dancing to fight off the German and east European challenge. In addition, the energy produced by the healthy rivalry between Bennett and Systum and the determination they share to make it to the top means it is too early to write Britain off as a serious contender in the international ten-dance league.



Bennett and Coster practise a Latin routine in training for the ten-dance world championships

eventually played in Six Clubs. In the process North had shown a balanced 15-17 points and South good club support with spade shortage. East led the ace of diamonds.

What do you make of that?

Sometimes players lead unsupported aces against slams because they are hoping to make a trump trick. And Fawcett saw an additional reason for playing East for club length — many hands with an ace and a void will be able to bid over One Club. If East had Qxx of clubs, he would be more likely to have a balanced hand, and so be less likely to bid. So Fawcett also decided to play East for trump length, and started the clubs by laying down the ace.

At another table the ebullient

Joe Fawcett opened One Club on the North hand, and with no opposition bidding

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

When you have ten cards in a suit missing only the queen, it is particularly irritating to lose a trick. At least two declarers managed it in the first division of the 1996-97 Premier League.

Dealer West Game all IMPs

♦A872	♦6543
♦KJ7	♦6542
♦K5	♦A1074
♦AJ92	♦—
N W E S	
♦KJ109	♦6542
♦1083	♦A1074
♦832	♦—
♦Q76	♦—

Contract: Six Clubs by South. Lead: jack of spades

Brian Senior and I reached Six Clubs after North (Senior) opened One Spade. Opening a four-card major with a good hand has some theoretical demerits, but that's what Senior likes so that's what we play.

The only problem in Six Clubs is to pick up the trump suit. Usually when a player has Qxx of trumps in a slam he "druckens" himself (an expression I saw in La Carre's *The Taylor of Panama*, meaning to make oneself inconspicuous), and leads quickly while trying to look invisible. But on this occasion West asked a lot of questions before leading, and hence I thought more likely that East had the queen of clubs. So I played a club to the ace, and went down.

At another table the ebullient

Joe Fawcett opened One Club on the North hand, and with no opposition bidding

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Staffordshire centenary

The Staffordshire centenary tournament resulted in a success for Bogdan Lalic and Jonathan Rowson who respectively scored seven and 6½ points from nine. In the game today grandmaster Lalic conducts an elegant positional campaign against the woman grandmaster Jana Bellin.

White's grip over important squares on the e-file, combined with pressure against Black's weak pawns on a5 and c6 eventually scored a model victory.

White: Bogdan Lalic

Black: Jana Bellin

Staffordshire centenary

April 1997

Queen's Indian Defence

1 N3 B6

2 c4 B5

3 e4 B6

4 d5 B7

5 B3 B6

6 B2 B7

7 C4+ B6

8 B6 B6

9 B5 B5

10 g3 o-o

11 B5 N7

12 C6 Rb7

13 Rf1 a5

14 B3 b5

15 C2 N6

16 a4 b4

17 N2 N4

18 N4 Q6

19 N3 Rg8

20 Rg1 Q8

21 N5 B6

22 N2 N6

23 Q3 N7

24 N63 C7

Diagram of final position



Computer challenge

In two weeks' time Garry Kasparov, the world champion, commences his rematch against IBM's mark II Deep Blue computer. Last Saturday I gave game five of the match last year with comments. From tomorrow I will give the remaining games of the 1996 clash and make my predictions on the result.

□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

Fear is the key to Villeneuve's drive for success

An arrogant adrenalin junkie, they call him, a space cadet, a shock jock, a suicide case, but, at the start of a week in which Formula One returns to Imola, for the San Marino Grand Prix, ritually to confront the realities of mortality, it is not that easy to marginalise Jacques Villeneuve.

Already, three races into the season, there is an air of inevitability about his ascent to the title of world drivers' champion. He has seized the platform offered by such a status to challenge the fundamental tenets of a sport manipulated by a strange combination of contrition and commercialism.

He abhors the selective morality that dismisses the death of his friend, Roland Ratzenberger, and deifies Ayrton Senna, who lost his life 24 hours later in a weekend, in 1994, that irreversibly altered the shape of his sport.

He is prepared to articulate the unthinkable, to criticise the conventional wisdom that

safety requires the emasculation of great circuits and encourages mediocrity, in men and machines. This does not make him popular, especially when such Formula One luminaries as Bernie Ecclestone and Damon Hill are preparing to testify at the manslaughter trial arising from Senna's death.

"Imola will be a circus," Villeneuve acknowledged, with a deep sigh. "All people will want to talk about there is tragedy. It's a recurring theme. Why can't we let people rest in peace? Of course I was affected by Imola '94, but that was not just because of Senna's death.

"I'm sad to say that, if only Roland had died that weekend, nothing would have been done. As soon as Ayrton died, they felt they had to react or had to be seen to react. I was a huge figure, loved by millions and people felt his loss personally.

"Safety is a good thing, but not when it destroys what racing is all about. Imola is now one of the worst circuits,

MICHAEL CALVIN



meets a Formula One champion-in-waiting

thing. I prefer to say what I think. I don't really care if I'm judged arrogant because of that. I don't force myself to say things to get a reaction. I say what I truly believe, deep down inside. There are not many drivers who are listened to, which is a shame because they are the guys who risk their lives."

Villeneuve's rationalisation of those risks is wilfully misinterpreted by apologists for a sanitised system. It suits some to characterise him as a callow youth, a speed freak, but the public, traditionally attuned to a racer's mentality, see behind the smokescreen.

On Saturday, more than 40,000 waited all day in the sand dunes of Zandvoort, west of Amsterdam, for a glimpse of him during a promotional trip by the Williams team. When he shuffled into view, a slight, almost Chapinesque figure in blue overalls, they struck up an insistent chant of "Jacques, Jacques".

He was touched by the response. As much as his



Villeneuve is critical of moves to make tracks safer

blue-green eyes may glaze over at the mention of his late father, Gilles, he has claimed his constituency.

"People want to become racing drivers because, as kids, they see them as superheroes," he said. "You see them pushing their limits as human beings, overcoming their fears and you are just so

impressed. If Formula One is to be a sport rather than a show, the stakes need to be high.

"Nobody is looking to kill themselves, that would be pure stupidity, but there needs to be that small sense of danger, that feeling that if you go one kilometre an hour quicker you are going to lose

thing will be levelled downwards. Anyone will be able to drive, because the mechanical and human limits will be so much lower.

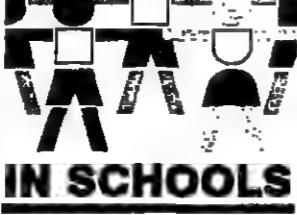
"There will be no risk, no rush. There will be no precision in the driving. It will all be numb. You'll lose all control, basically. You'll just be along for the ride. That's a big mistake. At least this year, with the softer tyres, you have to reach inside yourself to find the strength to do a quick lap. But if they change the regulations for '98, the fun will disappear."

"It might be good for TV, because the times will be closer, but the mediocre drivers will be able to hide. They'll be closer to the good guys and the best won't really be needed. They'll be more suited to the real racing you get in IndyCars."

"Formula One must be the ultimate in motor sport and I'm in it to race, not just collect the money. It might be ten times safer than before, but what good is that if we are not doing something special?"

Cole industry puts fire into England youngsters

England Schools 0
France Schools 0



SPORT

By JOHN GOODBODY

YOU can always tell when crowds are becoming vexed — they begin performing the Mexican wave. At Old Trafford on Saturday, the under-15 football international had become bemused after 60 minutes of play. Most of the early enterprise had come from France, winners and hosts last month of the Montaigu tournament, which involved 32 nations.

England, eighth in that competition, began this Walkers Crisps international cautiously. Many of their passing movements were broken up, either through their own carelessness or by smart French interceptions.

Suddenly, the game became transformed with both teams pressing forward with rare purpose. They may not have been any goals — and it would have been a gross injustice to France if England had won — but at least the crowd of 35,300 returned home satisfied with the spectacle.

Jean-Pierre Marlans, the France national team trainer, analysed the change of mood.

"The English organised themselves better and attempted more attacks, while our players lost some of their freshness," he said.

John Owens, who revels in his job as England team manager, saying that winning the National Lottery could not give him similar pleasure, accepted that England had been wary initially. "We knew the French had tremendous pace up front. Without trying to be too negative, we were aiming to stop them from scoring early on," he said.

Central to England's revival was the exciting industry of Joe Cole, who lay just behind the strikers and became increasingly influential as the game wore on: a deft dribble here, a crafty pass there.

Like five other members of



Osman, of England, right, loses possession to Mexes, of France, at Old Trafford on Saturday

the England squad, Cole attends the Football Association's national school at Lilleshall. The French have an equivalent at Clairefontaine, 60 miles south of Paris, but it is restricted to youngsters from the capital. Boys attend lessons at a school until 3pm and are then coached at the residential centre.

The French do have two national schools football tournaments, but the network of fixtures that is such a feature of school sport in England

only exists in a limited form. All the France squad on Saturday were linked with clubs, where they receive the bulk of their coaching.

In England, boys do receive training at the centres of excellence at professional clubs, but also play for their schools and districts. Owens said: "I think we have the best of both worlds, provided the boys do not play too much."

By having schools matches across the age groups, players who may have been missed by

professional clubs when they were younger can be spotted later.

Cole, 15, who lives near Camden Lock in north London, has already been spotted and is with West Ham United. "I just liked the club, the moment I first went to it. It is so friendly — not like some clubs, where you walk along a corridor and no-one knows you," he said.

Against France, Cole roused his team. In the seventeenth minute, his drive was kicked

off the line and, from the corner, Leon Osman had another shot stopped.

France nearly snatched victory in the 77th minute, when Cisse's shot hit a post with the ball rebounding straight to Birmingham's goalkeeper.

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FLORA LONDON MARATHON

Runners up to 7 hours, 15 minutes, 42 secs

The Times concludes its coverage of the 1997 Flora London Marathon with the names of the competitors who finished inside 7 hours, 15 minutes and 42 seconds. The results are provided by Unisys, of to the race.

ficial suppliers of computers to the race.



Sorry, rung number: the marathon's toughest climb is mastered by this competitor

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A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a dark, irregular object resting on a light-colored, textured surface. The object has a long, thin, horizontal extension on the left and a shorter, thicker, vertical or curved extension on the right. The background is dark and textured.

Keep on running: The bright sunshine of marathon Sunday ensures that this lone runner casts a shadow on the London streets. Photograph: Karl Prouse

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Batt	6:06:56;	S Allton	6:06:57;	G Mitchell	6:06:58;	S Broome	6:06:59;	A	
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Batt	6:06:95;	C La Grassa	6:06:96;	A van Dijk	6:06:97;	P Britnell	6:06:98;	C Sanmartin	
Batt	6:06:99;	G Vermell	6:06:100;	K Hooshan	6:06:101;	D Berrow	6:06:102;	J Bambbrick	
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EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

THE TIMES

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The Times Live is a new entertainment service in association with First Call, the leading ticketing agency, which offers readers priority bookings, special offers and discounted tickets on a huge range of live events — from pop to classical concerts, opera to ballet, theatre and sporting events.

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Tickets are available throughout May and June for: *Miss Saigon* (Mon-Thurs 7.45pm & Tue matinees 3pm); *Martin Guerre* (Mon-Thurs 7.45pm & Thurs matinees 3pm); *Cats* (Mon-Thurs 7.45pm & Tues matinees 3pm) and *Oliver* (Mon-Thurs 7.30pm & Wed matinees 2.30pm). Prices are £32.50 each plus a £2.50 booking fee per ticket.

To apply, collect five differently numbered tokens from *The Times*, this week. Token 1 appears below right and tokens will appear every day until Friday. When you have all five, complete the application form that will appear in *The Times* on Friday with full booking details and send it with your payment to: *The Times* Live, West End Theatre Offer.

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Hard work and innovation are at the heart of economic revival, says John Young

From suits to turbines, they're flying the flag

During a turbulent century, Britain's economic status has changed from that of "the workshop of the world" to being just another advanced industrial nation competing in an ever-growing global market. There has been no lack of crises along the way, including two world wars, which left Europe economically on its knees.

Britain was notoriously slower than most other industrialised nations to adapt to changes in world trading conditions.

Lack of investment, outdated labour practices and a failure to acknowledge a more competitive market led to this country being tagged "the sick man of Europe".

For many years, the pundits were preoccupied with the seemingly incurable deficit in the balance of payments. We hear relatively little about this nowadays as the focus seems to be on inflation and interest rates — but there is no room for complacency.

Although the nation's foreign currency reserve and overseas investments are far

stronger than a generation ago, in most months the balance sheet is in deficit. "Export or Die" may no longer be a fashionable slogan but it is no less true than it was. The annual Queen's Awards for Export, Technological and Environmental Achievement, announced today, are a reminder that hard work and imagination are at the heart of Britain's present economic revival.

They are also a timely acknowledgement that technology entries must have a practical application in industry and must be a commercial success. For environmental awards the rules are still tighter. Entries must offer major benefits compared to existing products or processes as well as being commercially successful.

Export achievement is more easily measured in terms of volume and earnings. Applicants are required to submit

three years' figures to demonstrate how exports have increased between year one and year two, and the extent to which the increase has been sustained in year three.

It may seem disappointing that the latter are only a third of the total in 1990, and that awards for environmental achievement appear to have made little progress since they were introduced in 1993. One explanation may be that the criteria have become stricter. Award rules stipulate that technology entries must have a practical application in industry and must be a commercial success.

But they are far outnumbered by small companies whose names are largely unknown. They are engaged in making everything from diving suits to wallpaper, from sweets to sewing needles, from gas turbines to children's books. Each has flown the flag for Britain and from today can fly its own flag of achievement.

For environmental awards the rules are still

'This country was called the sick man of Europe'



Olympic swimmers at Atlanta chose Speedo products

Second-hand success



conren ltd

Manufacturer and applicator of construction polymer coatings.

Conren, committed to a World Market, are pleased to be honoured with

THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR EXPORT ACHIEVEMENT



The Directors wish to thank all staff, customers and suppliers for their valuable contribution to winning this award.

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SELLING second-hand clothing to developing countries has produced a thriving business for Lawrence M Barry & Co in East London. Rodney Hobson writes:

Lawrence M Barry & Co in East London, Rodney Hobson writes:

Lawrence M Barry, a partner in the company, says: "I was working in my father's company handling ropes for pulpmaking and I said we should move into second-hand clothes, but he was against it.

"He said that when I became captain of the ship I could do what I liked. So when I took over 12 years ago I started collecting clothing with four staff."

Mr Barry says: "In developing countries, spending £50 on a suit could be a week's wages. An office worker there can have a nice suit for a fiver and a shirt for £1." The company now employs more than 100 people and has a fleet of 20 lorries.

The popular Dr Martens shoes have brought a second

export award for Airwave Limited, the Rushden, Northants, sales and marketing organisation of the Griggs group. Airwave began trading in 1988 and exports, which now account for three quarters of total sales, have rocketed since it won its first award in 1993.

Markets are worldwide, with the US taking one third of exports. A big increase in demand, the company's own marketing effort and increased production capacity are the reasons behind a £50 million increase in exports over the past three years.

Speedo International Limited, a maker of swimwear and beachwear, sells to 35 countries, mainly in Europe and Asia. Based at Nottingham, it is part of the Pentaflame sportswear group.

Speedo's international reputation has been enhanced by its sponsorship of 48 swimming federations. At the Atlanta Olympic Games last year, swimmers in the US, Australian and Chinese teams wore Speedo swimsuits.

EXPORT WINNERS

The following have been granted The Queen's Award for Exports in 1997.

AGCO Limited, Coventry: Agricultural and agro-chemical equipment.

AgriSense BCS Ltd, Pontypridd, Mid-Glamorgan: Biological products for insect pest monitoring and control.

AgriSystems (Overseas) Limited, Aylesbury, Bucks: Consulting and management services to agricultural companies, the rural development sector and post-conflict resettlement.

Airwave Limited, Rushden, Northants: Distributor of the Dr Martens range of footwear.

Always Engineering Ltd, Birmingham: Manufacture of belt transfer units used to help the movement of material and air cargo handling systems.

Aquilon Ltd, Rotherham, South Yorkshire: Specialist diving drysuits for sport, military, and commercial use.

Astracast Plc, Birstall, West Yorkshire: Manufacture of coloured composite sand.

Avia International Aerospace (a division of British Aerospace), Reginon Aircraft Limited), Stockport, Cheshire: BAE 146 civil aircraft and the new version, the Avro RJ.

Lawrence M Barry & Co, London: Export of second-hand clothing and shoes, all from UK sources.

British Aerospace (a division of British Aerospace), London: Advanced agency.

Burras Beers Worldwide Limited, Birmingham: The export organization of the Bass Group.

Camelot Research Limited, Camelot, Cornwall: Research chemicals for screening and development in the pharmaceutical and agrochemical industries.

Bisley Office Equipment Limited, Woking, Surrey: Office furniture such as systems furniture, desking and steel storage.

Blue Medical Equipment Limited, Chesham, Bucks: Anaesthetic equipment.

Borden Decorative Products Limited, Borden, Lancashire: Division, Darwen, Lancashire: Fine printed wallcoverings for residential and commercial use.

Bridgeport Machines Limited, London: Computer numerically controlled (CNC) horizontal and vertical machining centres, milling machines and lathes.

British Steel plc, London: The world's third largest steel maker.

Bullocky Metal Industries Ltd, London: Publisher of reports covering the political risk and economic prospects of emerging markets.

Carbombs Holdings Limited, Mirfield, West Yorkshire: Wool fabric for office furniture.

The Chambers Candy Co Ltd, Huddersfield: Quality gift confectionery.

Computational Dynamics Limited, London: Developers of STAR-CD, a multi-purpose thermofluids analysis system used by engineers.

Concept Systems Limited, Edinburgh: Data acquisition and navigation systems for the oil, marine and defence industries.

Cookson Electronics, Wrexham: Epoxy resin, polyurethane and cementitious polymer based industrial floor, roof and wall coatings.

Crane Chemicals Limited, Prescot, Merseyside: Fine and intermediate chemicals: specialised organic chemicals for the pharmaceutical, agrochemical, photographic and detergent sectors.

Crestworth Trading Ltd via

Crane Chemicals Division.

CSL International Limited, Cheadle Heath, West Midlands: Measuring systems, rendering systems, integral stud link chains, shackles, chain and rope fitting, and towing systems.

Harcora Chemicals UK Limited, Duxford, Cambridgeshire: Division.

Chesterle-Street, County Durham: Catalyst, paint driers and biocides for the coatings industry; and azo-bisobutynitrile for the rubber and chemical industries.

Henrob Limited, Flint, Clwyd: Self-piercing rivets and riveting systems.

John Hogg Technical Solutions Ltd, Macclesfield, Cheshire: Liquid dyes and pigments for use as fuel colourants by the international petroleum industry.

LSI United Kingdom Limited, Oldbury, West Midlands: Graphics, video, Greenock, Strathclyde: Personal computers and provider of customer support service.

Imperial Paperboard (Worthington) Ltd, Worthington, Cumbria: Packaging and graphics.

Crane Chemicals Division.

Thirteen is a lucky number for JCB



The same names keep cropping up, says Michael Hatfield

JCB Group has notched up another double in The Queen's Export Awards, this time by its wheeled loader and backhoe loader divisions, both based at Rocester, Staffordshire. It is the fourth time that the group has achieved a notable double in a single year. The company has won 13 awards since 1969.

Exports by the wheeled loader division, JCB Earthmovers, have risen from £6.6 million in 1994 to £20.4 million in 1996. Employing about 100 people, and exporting to Europe, the Middle and Far East, the US, Australia, Vietnam and Sweden, the introduction of new models has resulted in a sales increase of 50 per cent in the past two years.

The backhoe loader division, JCB Barnford Excavators, employing almost 300 people, has sold in some 120 countries over the past three years and exports have increased by almost £70 million to £177.9 million in 1996. The Martin-Baker Aircraft Company, based at Higher Denham, Uxbridge, has won six previous awards. The

company manufactures ejection seats and has pioneered the technical advancement of military air crew escape. Its export of ejection seats, helicopter crashworthy seats, spares and a full range of technical and support services to 50 countries, is estimated to have saved the lives of 6,570 air crew around the world.

Also in the aviation business, Avro International Aerospace, a division of British Aerospace Regional Aircraft, based at Woodford, Stockport, won an award for its export of the Bae 146 civil aircraft and the new, updated version known as the Avro RJ. The company's main export markets are Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Turkey, Malta, Colombia and Australia.

AGCO, makers of agricultural tractors, related parts

and agricultural equipment, and formerly known as Massey Ferguson, won its first export award in 1986.

The company, based in Coventry, has increased its exports by more than £100 million in the past three years and exports to more than 140 countries.

Lansing Linde, based at Basingstoke, world leader in the manufacture of fork-lift trucks and associated equipment, has previously won four export awards and a combined export and technology award in 1972.

Now German-owned, its traditional export markets, which have more than doubled in the past three years, are Europe, Commonwealth countries and the Middle East. Its fastest-growing new markets are in eastern Europe, the Far East and the Pacific Rim. Trading for more than a century, Phoenix Engineering, based at Chard, Somerset, is a small company manufacturing road maintenance equipment. Exports have increased by more than 150 per cent in the past three years.

Its products go to more than 70 markets, mostly developing countries. Thailand has been the main market.

Michael Hatfield on the firms with a global lead in advanced technology

Direct line overseas



AN Edinburgh-based telecommunications software company, Kingston-SCL Ltd, has increased its overseas earnings nearly tenfold from licensing agreements and has won a Queen's award for its export achievement.

Michael Lacey, managing director, says: 'It's an outstanding achievement when you consider we have only been exporting since 1991. Then, we sold under £200,000 of our services outside the UK. Now that figure has increased by over 68 times to £17 million. We are profitable and we are still rapidly growing.'

Another telecommunications company which has made strides against strong international competition is GPT Public Networks Group, based at Coventry, which makes the plumbing of the rapidly growing industry of transmission networks, and has increased its export sales between 1994-96 by 240 per cent. It is the second year in succession that it has won an export award.

The small company of Electra Polymers & Chemicals Ltd based at Tonbridge, Kent, employs 28 people and makes a range of fine polymers, coatings and chemicals for the electronics industry and has won the export award for the first time. Founded in 1984 by Nick Hesom, chairman and managing director, the company's annual sales and production figures have doubled since February 1995 and exports have tripled in the last three years.

Computational Dynamics Limited, based in London, develops and markets a multi-purpose thermofluids analysis software system used by engineers to simulate fluid flow, heat transfer and chemical reaction in industry and the environment. Some 90 per cent of its turnover is in exports and it is particularly involved in the automotive industry.

Pixel Power Limited has 20 employees and started in Cambridge ten years ago. It makes hardware and software systems for creating graphics, text and animation, for television programme production and broadcasting. Its main product, Collage, which can produce animated text as well as graphics on screen, is currently available in 20 language versions, the most recent in Slovenian and Thai.

Planit International Ltd, based at Ashford, Kent, started trading in 1984 and develops and sells computer aided planning and costing software for retailers and makers of kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms and office furniture.



Kingston-SCL's Jupiter billing and customer-care system has 40 users in 28 countries

EXPORT WINNERS

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Industrial Technology International, Cheshire: Manufacturer of tank insulation, industrial Coatings and Chemicals Ltd, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire: High purity gases and liquid chemicals for high technology industries.

International KD Logistics & Technology Support Operations, Dagenham, Essex: Ford Motor Company organisation developing materials for vehicle lift systems.

International Systems and Communications Ltd, London: Publications in several languages for UN bodies and other international organisations and a range of software products.

Interpack Worldwide plc, London: International removal and relocations services for individual and corporate clients.

Invertek plc, Dunfermline: Specialise in paper and board at four mills in Scotland and one in Somerset.

Backhoe Loader Division, JCB Barnford Excavators Limited, Buntingford, Hertfordshire: Backhoe loaders for the construction industry.

JCB Earthmovers Limited (Wheeled Loader Division), Stowmarket, Suffolk: Wheeled loading shovels, the largest volume product in the earth moving sector.

W Jordan (Ceramic) Limited, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Natural breakfast cereals.

Keith Ceramic Materials Ltd, Belvedere, Kent: Synthetic refractory raw materials.

Globality plc, Edinburgh: Ginterplex SCL Ltd, Edinburgh: Telecommunications software.

Lansing Linde Limited, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Fork lift trucks and related services.

Marin-Baker Aircraft Company Limited, Higher Denham, Nr Uxbridge, Middlesex: Aircraft ejection seats and helicopter crashworthy seats.

continued on page 45

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on closer inspection

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British expertise takes off

Rodney Hobson reports on the latest technology award winners

 TRAVEL by air is now safer and more entertaining, thanks to pioneering work by Racal Avionics. Based in southwest London, the company has developed an airborne satellite communications system (satcom) that has been adopted by almost every major airline.

Sean O'Malley, the managing director, says: "Our system reports the aircraft's position accurately, allowing aircraft to fly closer together safely because the pilots know exactly where the other planes are. Routing of aircraft can be improved."

Racal's satellite communications system allows passengers to make in-flight telephone and fax calls and to link laptop computers to the Internet. They can retrieve information and send e-mail messages while in the air. In future, passengers will be able to make car hire, hotel and restaurant reservations, play computer games and watch videos.

Satcom was a joint operation with Honeywell of the US, and involved 60 staff in Britain and 60 in Phoenix, Arizona. Racal contributed its engineering skills and Honeywell its marketing and product-support expertise. The Racal Electronic group has now won 33 Queen's Awards, 20 for export and 13 for technology.

The technology award won by Aspect, a company that moulds contact lenses, will be announced this morning at the optical industries exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham.

The company's system for moulding disposable soft contact lenses has been developed in the face of stiff foreign competition. Since it began manufacturing at a new plant at Hamble in Hampshire two-and-a-half years ago, production has multiplied seven times. The service centre at Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, handles more than 1,000 telephone orders a day. Aspect's UltraSYNC moulding system

cameras that use silicon chips produced by VLSI Vision are cheaper, smaller and use less power than previously. The Edinburgh company produced the chips for a video camera for children marketed at less than £100 last Christmas. VLSI Vision has already gained a Queen's Award in successive years.

Percell, based at Newport, Gwent, developed its Tellermate machine for counting banknotes and coins by weighing them. Tellermate works by comparing a batch of notes with the memorised weight of a standard sample. It can cope with dirt and wear.

Coins are counted in plastic cups that fit into cash drawers and can be lifted straight into the machine. The time taken to count the contents of a bank till is reduced to 45 seconds from

anything up to 15 minutes. Yet Edgar Biss, the company founder and managing director, says: "Success brings its own problems. I see our 100 per cent growth rate as a failure rather than a success. We are developing new product ranges that have the potential to give us tenfold growth within a couple of years, but we simply do not have the resources to deliver the potential."

Tellermate is exported to 25 countries and is used in major UK retail chains such as Homebase, W.H. Smith, Safeway and Pret a Manger as well as branches of major banks. Exports account for 75 per cent of sales with overseas customers including McDonald's and PepsiCo.

Edgar Biss, managing director of Percell, has guided his firm to 100 per cent growth

Countdown to success

A SMALL, privately owned Welsh business has joined the elite ranks of companies that have won a double award for export and technology. Rodney Hobson writes. It also stands alongside ICI as one of the few to have gained a Queen's Award in successive years.

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TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

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Healthy growth in turnover produces results

Michael Hatfield looks at export winners in medicine and health



A COMPANY that exports personal care, health care, beauty, and household products has won a Queen's Award for Export. Exports from the Chatwani family's company, Davis & Dunn, Ruislip, Middlesex, now account for 80 per cent of turnover.

Blease Medical Equipment Ltd, part of Blease Medical Holdings Ltd, based at Chesham, Bucks, manufacturer of anaesthetic equipment for use in operating theatres, has won an export award in a highly competitive market. Export sales, which represent 70 per cent of the company's

turnover, have doubled during the past three years.

The Northern Ireland company Perfect Seal Limited, of Londonderry, has won its second award for the manufacture and export of packaging for sterile equipment for medical and surgical use. The company has achieved sustained growth and exports to 22 countries, mainly in Europe.

Another second-time winner is Pfizer Limited, of Sandwich, Kent. Part of an American-owned group, it develops pharmaceutical and animal

health products, and has twice won the Queen's Award for Technological Achievement. The total overseas earnings grew by more than £130 million during the three years of the application, and represented two-thirds of total sales.

Shicke Diagnostics Limited, of Dundee, Scotland, has achieved its second award for the manufacture of *in vitro* medical diagnostic kits for auto-immune infectious diseases, microbiology, and cardiovascular diseases. Its exports have increased by more than 250 per cent since 1995

and represent two-thirds of total sales. It sells to 60 countries.

A first-time winner is Bionet Research Limited, Camelot, Cornwall. It produces research chemicals for screening and possible development in the pharmaceutical and agro-chemical sectors. Almost all its production is exported. Exports increased more than fivefold during the three years of the application.

Contract Chemicals Ltd, Prescot, Merseyside, a first-time winner, develops and synthesises fine and intermediate chemicals to order and

manufactures specialised organic chemicals for the pharmaceutical, agro-chemical, photographic, and detergent sectors. During the period of application, it doubled its substantial exports, which represent two-thirds of total sales. It sells in 28 countries.

Entaco Ltd (English Needle & Fishing Tackle Co Ltd), based at Studley, Warwickshire, manufactures and exports hand-sewing needles, medical suture needles, and commercial long-line fishing equipment. It has extended its range by developing special needles for craft, tattooing, and sewing. It exports to about 60 countries.

A breath of fresh air for industry

John Young on the companies who think green and clean



THE environment category was added to The Queen's Awards in 1993, at a time of acute criticism of industry's allegedly irresponsible attitude towards pollution.

With air pollution the current cause for concern, it is no surprise that three of the eight projects chosen for this year's awards are aimed at reducing fuel consumption and minimising emissions, and another at eliminating unnecessary dust.

One of the winners is Autoflame Engineering, of Bellingham, southeast London, for developing a microprocessor to provide more accurate control of fans and pumps without affecting combustion performance. It is claimed to reduce fuel consumption by at least 8 per cent.

Two companies engaged in the production of gas turbines are rewarded for the development of low-emission combustion systems. The Rolls-Royce lean burn process has been

found to achieve significant reductions in nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide emissions by as much as 85 per cent.

The European Gas Turbines unit, manufactured in Lincoln, is said to have reduced nitrogen oxide emissions by as much as 85 per cent.

Cleveland Cascades, a division of Cleveland Potash, based in Middlesbrough, wins an award for a loading chute that eliminates dust emissions from bulk materials.

H & R Johnson Tiles, of Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, part of the Norcros group, is the largest manufacturer of ceramic tiles in the United Kingdom. The pottery industry notoriously produces huge quantities of waste but this company recycles its own waste, and two years ago it began to include scrap material from other companies.

Laporte Absorbents, of Widnes, Cheshire, has developed a new water purification coagulant known as Ferral, which is cost-effective and offers several environmental benefits.

The amount needed is usually considerably lower than



On the tiles: H & R Johnson's team, from left, Paul Herbert, Malcolm Lawson, Tony Cotton, Alastair Keaton and John Doorbar

with traditional coagulants, and the quantity of sludge generated in the process, which needs to be disposed of, is significantly reduced.

A further environmental benefit occurs during manufacture. Ferral is produced by extracting iron and aluminium compounds from clay waste normally disposed of in landfill sites. The amount of waste is now expected to be some 20,000 tonnes less in 1997-98 than it would otherwise have been.

The following have been granted The Queen's Award for Environmental Achievement in 1997:

Autoflame Engineering Ltd, London, microprocessor-based combustion control systems to reduce fuel consumption and minimise harmful emissions.

Cleveland Cascades, Middlesbrough, Cleveland loading chute that eliminates dust emissions and minimises segregation and segregation of bulk materials.

European Gas Turbines Ltd, Nottingham Gas Turbine Group, Lincoln, low-emission combustion unit for industrial gas turbines. H & R Johnson Tiles Limited, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, recycling scrap from 12 tileware manufacturers, which previously had to landfill, with their own internal waste.

Laporte plc — Absorbents (Europe) Division, Widnes, Cheshire, a new range of water purification coagulant (Ferral), derived from waste stream material from clay processing.

Rolls-Royce Industrial & Marine Gas Turbines Ltd, Coventry, a low-emission (DLE) combustion system for industrial gas-turbine gas turbines.

Sony Manufacturing Company UK, Peterlee, Tyne and Wear, environmentally friendly machine soldering process.

Varn Products Company Ltd, Irlam, Manchester, development of a new, alcohol-free, organic coagulant and an alcohol-free de-inking solution for use in the printing industry.

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We would also like to thank our employees, customers and suppliers for their part in our success.

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Telephone 0116 602 1011
Facsimile 0116 602 4187

EXPORT WINNERS

Companies from page 43

Matsushita Communications Industrial UK Ltd, Thatcham, Berks: Panasonic range of mobile telephones and accessories.

Mitoff International (UK) Ltd, Penyffordd, Cardiff: Coloured televisions and micro-wave ovens.

Millar Aviation Limited, Ringwood, Hampshire: Spare parts for British manufactured fixed and rotary-winged military aircraft.

Millennium Engineering Co Ltd, Chard, Somerset: Road maintenance equipment.

Pipeline Integrity International, Grangemouth, Fife: Pipeline services to pipeline operators worldwide.

Pixel Power Limited, Cambridge: Hardware and software systems for creating graphics, text and sound for PC, TV, programmed.

Plastiflex International Ltd, Ashford, Kent: Computer-aided planning and costing software for retailers and manufacturers of kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms and office furniture.

Plasma Semiconductor Limited, via GEC Plessey Semiconductors, Swindon, Wiltshire: Silicon integrated circuits and power semiconductors.

Proton Textiles Ltd, London: Knitted fabric for sportswear, particularly for football.

RTA Wire Rack Company Limited, Fakenham, Norfolk: Wire racks, exported to 33 countries.

Randor Laboratories Ltd, Crumlin, Co Antrim: Diagnostic kits for the detection of metabolic, nutritional and environmental pollutants.

River Dan Castings Limited, Sheffield: Steel castings for use in the off-shore oil industry and other metalworking industries.

Schmitz (Europe) Limited, Bradford, West Yorkshire: Turbochargers and turbocharger components.

Shield Diagnostics Limited, Dundee: Medical diagnostic kits for autoimmune infectious diseases, microbiology and pathology.

Soil Machine Dynamics Limited, Newcastle upon Tyne: Subsoil machines for the burial and maintenance of submarine cables and pipelines.

Speedo International Limited, Nottingham: Swimsuit and beachwear, selling in 35 countries.

Stainless Steel Systems Limited, Cowes, Isle of Wight: Advanced composite materials for use in a range of dynamics, high temperature and high pressure.

Surface Technology Systems Limited, Abercarn, Newport: Plasma etching and plasma deposition systems for the deposition and etching of semiconductor devices.

Tensator Limited, Milton Keynes, Bucks: Constant force springs used in seal and vacuum cleaner retension.

Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd, Burnaston, Derbyshire: Corina E cars, car parts and engines.

Turner Engineering Ltd, Tipton, West Midlands: Professional loudspeakers.

Unisearch Limited, Huddersfield: Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire: Gaskets, seals and engine components for diesel and petrol engines.

Victric plc, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire: Manufacture PESK® poly(etheretherketone), a thermoplastic for advanced engineering usage.

Vitacalender, Saltford, Lancashire: Coloured ribbons.

Wafers Technology Ltd, Milton Keynes, Bucks: Compound semiconductor materials.

Charles Wells Limited, Bedford: Independent brewery.

Wetstone International Limited, Buntingford, Bedfordshire: Metallic pigments and metallic inks.

Woodland Potters Limited, Botsford-on-Trent, Staffordshire: Earthenware tableware.

Blease Frontline



Blease gain The Queen's Award for Export Achievement

Blease are delighted to announce that they have been selected to receive The Queen's Award for outstanding achievement in export.

This prestigious award is highly prized and recognises a proven track record in exporting significant volumes of the company's products. Blease, based in Chesham, England, is a worldwide manufacturer of quality and innovative anaesthesia equipment. The Frontline Plus™ range of anaesthesia machines, ventilators and vaporizers are used and trusted by clinicians around the globe.

Established for over 40 years, Blease has faced tough competition from American, German and Japanese companies. However with the Blease commitment to providing high performance equipment that is reliable and maintainable - whatever the environment, they have become one of the world's major exporters in the field of anaesthesia.

Blease, British manufacturers of anaesthesia equipment for the world.

Frontline Plus™ range of anaesthesia machines, ventilators and vaporizers.

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RESULTS AND STATISTICS

TODAY

Interims: Kleinwort Second Endowment, Norsk Hydro (Q1).
Finals: Dumyat Investment Trust, Kleinwort Endowment Policy, Pex, Premier Farnell, United Energy.
Economic statistics: US Treasury March budget statement.

TOMORROW

Interims: Cosalt, DFS Furniture, James Dickie, M&G Equity Investment Trust, McCarthy & Stone, Nynex CableComms Group (Q1), SmithKline Beecham (Q1), St Ives.
Finals: Fishers International, Henderson Highland Trust, Innovative Technologies.
Economic statistics: EU agricultural ministers meeting in Luxembourg; US Treasury auction of two-year notes.

WEDNESDAY

Interims: GATX Corporation, Philips Electronics (Q1).
Finals: Bank of Scotland, Bentalls, James Beattie, Seatfield.
Economic statistics: UK March retail sales; minutes of March 5, UK monthly monetary meeting; Bank of England to auction 7 per cent 2002 stock; CBI quarterly industrial trends survey; IMF releases world economic outlook report.

THURSDAY

Interims: Cater Allen Gilt, ICI (Q1), Shires Smaller Companies.
Finals: Laura Ashley Holdings, Austin Reed, Daks Simpson Group, Eurotunnel, Fitzwilliam, Folkes Group, Foreign & Colonial Pacific, Scottish & Mortgage Trust, Trinity Holdings, Uganda International.
Economic statistics: UK February global, March non-EU trade balances; UK March EU harmonised consumer-prices index; IMF's Michel Camdessus holds press conference.

FRIDAY

Interims: none scheduled.
Finals: none scheduled.
Economic statistics: UK Q1 preliminary GDP.

COMPANIES

MICHAEL CLARK

Laura Ashley has designs on growth

LAURA ASHLEY: Full-year figures on Thursday are expected to reflect the benefits of the stringent cost-cutting campaign implemented by Ann Iverson, chief executive, upon her arrival. As a result, pre-tax profits should be up from £10.3 million to £15.5 million, while earnings should have grown by 53 per cent from 3p to 4.6p.

Trading during the period remained patchy. As the Christmas trading statement revealed, a like-for-like sales increase of 7 per cent during the first six months had been almost completely eroded during the second six months.

Any improvement to profits in the current year will depend on the performance of its new ranges for the summer. The ranges are deemed to have improved, and, with the benefit of better weather, a narrowing of the gap between home furnishings and garments may be anticipated.

Shareholders are likely to be rewarded with an increase of some 200 per cent in the net dividend from 0.5p to 1.5p.

SMITHKLINE BEECHAM: Further strong performances from its pharmaceutical and healthcare divisions should help to offset the ill-effects of currency fluctuations.

The first-quarter pre-tax profits due to be announced tomorrow are likely to reveal an increase of about 10 per cent, from £387 million to £425 million, with earnings 8 per cent ahead at 10.3p.

At constant exchange rates sales of pharmaceuticals should be up by about 11 per cent, excluding the DPS acquisition. The main thrust to sales will come from Paxil, up 30 per cent, Augmentin, up 8 per cent, and a 25 per cent increase in sales of vaccines.

Among SmithKline's new drugs, Tytril and Famvir are expected to have made further solid progress.

Sales in consumer healthcare are likely to be up about 13 per cent at constant currencies, with further strong performances expected from Nicorette and Nicoderm in the US where the group boasts an 80 per cent market share.

A first-quarter payout of 4p is expected compared with 3.6p for the corresponding period, and brokers such as NatWest Securi-



Ann Iverson's cost-cutting campaign is expected to boost Laura Ashley's full-year figures

ties have pencilled in profits of £1.7 billion for the full year.

ICI: The first-quarter figures due on Thursday are likely to prove every bit as bad as feared with pre-tax profits set to tumble from £202 million to £75 million. The reduction in earnings is likely to be even greater, down from 15.9p to 4.5p, a fall of 72 per cent. The strong pound will have cost the group dearly with a negative impact of about £80 million expected. This is likely to mark the low point in the group's fortunes.

A slump in selling prices, high feed costs and a strong pound have all combined to take their toll.

The paint division is expected to produce a seasonally weak

performance, although profits will be up sharply as a result of a contribution from the Bunge paints business.

The materials division is likely to show a further deterioration, while the benefits of rationalisation in the US should start to be felt in explosives. The worst performance will come from industrial chemicals where a loss is expected after higher feed stocks eat into margins.

BANK OF SCOTLAND: An otherwise exemplary set of annual results due out on Wednesday will be spoilt by the unexpectedly slow progress being made at BankWest, the West Australian retail bank that was acquired last year.

Johnny de la Hey, bank analyst at Credit Lyonnais Laing, which forecasts pre-tax profits of £64.9 million compared with £54.5 million last time, says that since Bank of Scotland purchased a 51 per cent stake in BankWest from the state Government it has failed even to reach the targets set out in its prospectus.

Based on its other businesses, however — such as NWS Bank, the finance house — the Credit Lyonnais team predicts a 19 per cent rise in the net dividend to 8.15p and remains bullish on the shares.

PREMIER FARNELL: After the profits warning in January, full-year figures later today are unlikely to contain many surprises.

The group is set to report an

increase in pre-tax profits of 79 per cent from £5.5 million to £35 million following the acquisition of Premier, although earnings will take a nosedive from 3.75p to 2.6p. But the real focus of attention will be on prospects and future plans, highlighting the long-term benefits of the Premier deal.

Last year saw the group badly exposed to the slump in the worldwide semiconductor market, which accounts for 20 per cent of the core catalogue division's revenues. Brokers will undoubtedly be hoping for signs of an upturn underpinning an improvement in the semiconductor market.

Despite the uncertainty expressed by brokers about the future, hopes are high that there is scope to lift the payout by 11 per cent from 10.8p to 12p.

DPS: Growth continues despite evidence of a general downturn in house-related expenditure and rising costs. This will be reflected in half-year figures tomorrow expected to show pre-tax profits up almost 20 per cent at £18 million. This will be matched by earnings up from 9.6p to 11.4p.

A 33 per cent increase in sales to £116 million will be fuelled by an aggressive store opening programme.

Two new stores were opened during the period, stretching the total number to 40. Like-for-like sales grew 10 per cent in 1996. But the sharp increase in advertising during the period, particularly in and around the London area, will prove a drag on overall profitability.

The payout is expected to be up about 19 per cent to 3.7p.

AUSTIN REED: A strong recovery is on the cards when the group unveils full-year figures on Thursday. These are expected to show pre-tax profits almost doubled at £6.7 million, compared with £3.4 million last time, along with earnings up from 7.2p to 14.3p.

A positive trading statement in January cheered the market and provided evidence of a useful improvement in margins. Sales are reckoned to have grown by about 9 per cent, but manufacturing remains difficult. Brokers say the recovery still has some way to go. The payout is likely to be up from 6p to 6.75p.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

City focus on fate of rates

THE City is all but convinced of a Labour election victory and has turned its attention to the chances of a rate rise after the new Chancellor's first monetary meeting on May 7. The consensus is that rates will rise 0.25 per cent but stronger than expected GDP and retail sales data this week could put a half-point rise on the agenda.

The first-quarter GDP figures, due on Friday, are expected to show the economy continuing to accelerate. MMS International, the economic forecasting group, predicts quarterly growth at 0.8 per cent, taking the annual rate of growth from 2.6 per cent to 2.9 per cent. This expansion is regarded as well above trend by the Bank of England and is likely to harden its calls for a rate rise.

Warm weather and an early Easter should have given a boost to the retail sales figures due on Wednesday, but the City is still expecting more modest growth than in February. MMS predicts that the monthly increase will fall slightly, from 0.5 per cent to 0.4 per cent, with the annual rate remaining flat at 4.4 per cent. The minutes for the March monetary meeting are also published on Wednesday, but Eddie George has made no secret of his position on rates and the minutes are likely to be little more than a footnote.

The CBI industrial trends survey, which is released on Wednesday, is expected to show that in contrast to the booming retail sector, manufacturing activity and prices remain subdued because of the strong pound. The trade figures on Thursday will provide further evidence of the impact of the pound on manufacturing. The worldwide trade gap for February is forecast to rise from £641 million to £800 million. The non-EU trade figures for March are also expected to show the deficit growing from £54 million to £650 million.

In a quiet economic week abroad, German M3 statistics — a target measure for the Bundesbank — are forecast to show a decline in monetary growth from 9.1 per cent to 8.5 per cent.

In Japan, consumer prices data will provide the first information on the impact of a rise in consumption tax from 3 per cent to 5 per cent.

ALASDAIR MURRAY

SUNDAY TIPS

The Sunday Times: Buy Westminster Health Care, Emes, Northamber; Sell Highland, The Sunday Telegraph: Buy Sanctuary Music, Alexon, Charterhouse Communications; Sell JJB Sports, The Observer: Buy Associated British Foods; Hold Tie Rack, Independent on Sunday: Buy Northamber, Slough Estates, The Mail on Sunday: Buy European Colour, Datrontech; Hold Mice Group; Sell Bass.

Value on offer despite the risks

There are various ways we can look at fair value for conventional gilts. Current index-linked yields are about 3.6 per cent. To this we should add an allowance for inflation. At 2.7 per cent the RPI is rising in line with its five-year average rate. Finally we need to add a risk premium. As a proxy we can take the volatility (standard deviation) of inflation over the past five years. This is equal to 0.8 per cent. On this basis ten-year yields should be about 7.1 per cent, compared to an actual level of 7.5 per cent.

Of course fair value is more likely to be a range than a single point. We know that index-linked yields tend to be volatile, reflecting underlying growth conditions and international levels of real yields. The volatility of index-linked yields over the past five years is about 0.35 per cent. Allowing for this we suggest the fair range for conventional gilts of 6.75 per cent to 7.45 per cent — still just below current levels.

Although gilt yields are fair value to cheap, they may rise further. It is typical for markets to be driven to valuation extremes before heading back towards fair value. Moreover, real yields (measured as nominal yields minus inflation) at 4.6 per cent are only in line

with their average of the past ten years. They are below their average of the past five years — currently 5.3 per cent.

Upside risks to current yield levels come from domestic and international sources. First, UK economic growth needs to be slowed by higher rates. Building society handouts will add to the rapid pace of consumer expenditure in the second half of this year. Already on some estimates there is little output gap left in the UK. Since the money supply is increasing rapidly, the labour market is tightening and wage

exposure. Second, by comparison with a number of other international markets, gilts look quite attractive and so should be overweighted in an international portfolio. They contain more protection against higher inflation, higher growth and higher rates than most markets. Real yields (defined as the difference between nominal rates and current inflation) are higher than in most other countries. Nominal yields are the highest in Europe. Once the election is out of the way some of the risk premium associated with current uncertainty should come out of the spread against other markets. Gilts ought to be attractive to international investors. If EMU runs into problems, gilts provide a hedge against bonds in other European countries. If it goes ahead, gilts may be the last convergence play left in Europe.

Despite a significant risk that gilts will underperform cash in coming months, they remain one of the more attractive international markets and from a longer-term perspective are starting to offer value at current levels.

If there is this upward risk for yields why hold gilts at all? Firstly, as has been suggested, from a longer-term perspective gilts already look to be fair value. Overshoots in value are an opportunity to increase

inflation is rising at 5 per cent, the risk of future inflation is rising. Consequently, it is probable that we will have a number of rate increases after the election. Given the high correlation between short and long rates, rising base rates will make it almost impossible for gilts to perform well. This is still true even though rate rises to about 7.1 per cent appear to be discounted in the forward markets for the next year.

Second, the international bond environment is not constructive. Given the integration of global capital markets, it is

Answers from page 37

TITRE

(a) The fineness of gold or silver. In chemistry, the strength of a solution as determined by titration. From the French *titre* a title or qualification. "The French rule for finding the part of a foreign gold coin is to multiply its weight by its standard or titre."

URE

(a) A damp mist. Local Scottish dialect. From the Old Norse *ur* meaning rain. "Glowing at the azure sky, / And loamy oceans ure."

TROCHILUS

(b) A small Egyptian bird (not certainly identified) said by the ancients to pick the teeth of the crocodile. From the Greek for a ronier, from *trichēin* to run. "When the crocodile yawns, the trochilus flies into his mouth and cleans his teeth."

UNICIST

(a) A believer in the unity of the Godhead, with none of the complex arithmetic about the Trinity. From the Latin *unicus* one. "The schoolmen would perhaps have called you Unicists but your proper name is Ptolomists."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Qxb8 Qxb8 (1... Nc3+ 2 Kai doesn't help) 2 Nxc7 Kh8 3 Rxb7 checkmate

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sales
Australia \$	2.20	2.04
Austria Sch	20.67	19.17
Belgium Fr	50.81	58.31
Canada \$	2.398	2.228
Cyprus Cyp	0.874	0.609
Denmark Kr	11.23	10.43
Finland Mkk	8.95	8.30
France Fr	9.87	9.17
Germany Dm	2.98	2.71
Greece Dr	460	430
Hong Kong \$	13.38	12.28
Iceland Kr	1.77	1.07
Ireland Pt	1.11	1.03
Israel Shk	5.84	5.19
Italy Lira	2919	2719
Japan Yen	219.81	203.80
Malta	0.650	0.605
Netherlands Gld	3.332	3.062
N Zealand \$	2.51	2.29
Norway Kr	12.05	11.29
Portugal Esc	283.00	273.00
S Africa Rand	7.96	7.06
Spain Pta	247.50	230.50
Sweden Kr	13.33	12.33
Switzerland Fr	2.52	2.32
Turkey Lira	223.657	209.657
USA \$	1.730	1.600

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

CHANGE ON WEEK

	THE POUND
US dollar	1.6310 (+0.0055)
German mark	2.7991 (-0.0028)
Exchange index	99.8 (+0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	

	STOCK MARKET

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Pressure groups hit home

Pressure groups affect the way more than half of Britain's big companies operate, says a survey published today.

The survey, based on the views of 250 companies, also suggests that recent campaigns by organisations such as Greenpeace have convinced companies that pressure groups will become more influential in the future.

Peter Hamilton, managing director of The Communication Group, the public relations company that carried out the survey, said: "The message to business is absolutely clear. It is simply not an option to ignore pressure groups. Protesters are finding that going through the conventional political channels doesn't work and that direct action is more effective."

Warrants move

Covered warrants, securities that can give the option to buy anything from debt to metal, are to be traded alongside equities by the London Stock Exchange. The warrants, currently traded over-the-counter, are to be transferred to the screen-based dealing system used by AIM companies along with buying and selling prices. The draft rules for the new system are published today, and the new-style trading is expected to begin in June.

Market bound

Royalblue, a software company, plans to go public this summer with an estimated market value of £35-64 million. The company specialises in financial trading systems, corporate call centres and customer help desks.



Rosalind Wright, new head of the SFO, who takes office today. She has to balance the demands of a record case load against a shrinking budget

Tough debut for SFO chief

BY ROBERT MILLER

ROSALIND WRIGHT, who takes up her new post as director of the Serious Fraud Office today, is facing a tough task with a record case load being handled on a shrinking budget and with no police force of her own to call on.

Ms Wright, who was formerly an executive director of the Securities and Futures Authority, the City watch-

dog for brokers and futures dealers, is expected to press the new Government after the election for a bigger purse with which to tackle her investigations.

These include the \$1.8 billion Sumitomo Corporation copper fraud; the Peter Young unit trust inquiry at Morgan Grenfell, and the circumstances surrounding the collapse of Facia, the privately owned retail empire.

The SFO also continues to

maintain a watching brief on the civil inquiry at NatWest into the £90 million black hole.

The new SFO director, who succeeds George Staple, is expected to handle these cases on an annual budget that in 1996-97 is estimated at £17 million, the same as the previous year. This figure, however, is scheduled to fall by £1 million in the next year to level out at £15 million by the end of the decade.

The SFO employs its own

lawyers, accountants and financial investigators but has to call for assistance from local or regional fraud squads depending on the region in which the initial offence of fraud or theft was committed.

The most experienced fraud squad, and the one that handles most of the present SFO caseload, is the City of London fraud squad, which is engaged on the copper and Peter Young investigations. If the fraud office were to take on the

NatWest case it is expected that the City of London police would be assigned to that as well.

Ms Wright has already let it be known that she feels that her budget needs expanding particularly as most SFO investigations involve a number of different jurisdictions and cases of particular complexity.

A dedicated police force assigned to the fraud office would also help her cause, she believes.

Broker highlights possible crash

BY FRASER NELSON

TEATHER & Greenwood, the most active broker on the Alternative Investment Market, has given a warning that the junior exchange may be on the brink of a mini-crash, and has advised its clients to buy fully listed stocks instead.

The broker, which acts for one in every nine of AIM's 260 companies, holds little hope that the FT-SE AIM index, which has lost 3 per cent of its value in the past month, will be able to mount a resurgence.

In the April edition of its smaller companies briefing, it says: "It is significant that the FT-SE AIM index has broken its down-trend against the FT-SE AIM index this month, confirming that it will continue to outperform this index in 1997. This is another reason for our suggesting that the FT-SE AIM index may have peaked."

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Buoyant small firms boost the jobs market

BY PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN'S owner-managed small firms are each creating on average 12 jobs every year, new evidence from industry suggests today as a further separate study shows demand for permanent staff rising at its fastest rate for a decade.

Companies in the UK's owner-managed small business sector are seeing rapidly improving sales and profits and the creation of a significant number of jobs.

Research findings today from KPMG, the accountants and business advisers, show that new business entrepreneurs are now playing a big role in helping to put Britain back to work.

Looking at the filed financial accounts of a sample of 3,000 owner-managed businesses with annual turnovers of £2 million to £60 million, KPMG finds such firms increasing their operating profits 14 per cent, and turnover 15 per cent to £54.5 billion.

The study says that such growth allowed owner-managed companies last year to add an extra 37,000 jobs to their staff rolls — or an average of 12 new jobs for every firm.

Companies in the South East performed best overall, though the largest job increases were in the West, and the smallest in the North East. But the study shows that, even in smaller companies, boardroom salaries are still markedly outpacing those for employees generally, with a 9 per cent increase in company

directors' pay compared with a 5.2 per cent rise for staff.

John Eggleston, KPMG head of services for owner-managed businesses, says the survey demonstrates the importance of the enterprise culture to the economy: "Businesses are displaying confidence in their products and the people to make them."

In a separate study, Reed Personnel, recruitment specialists, says that demand for permanent staff is up 16 per cent in the first quarter of this year — the highest quarterly increase since 1987.

The company tracks demand for both permanent and temporary staff by means of its employment index, drawing on statistics from its 200 branches. Reed's permanent index for the first three months of this year has risen from 75 points to 87, and demand now stands at its highest level since the fourth quarter of 1990, just before the UK plunged into recession.

But it is still only 70 per cent of the demand for staff at the height of the economic boom of the late 1980s. Demand for temporary staff is falling slightly, with the company's index down a percentage point in the first quarter, though this may reflect normal seasonal patterns.

Alec Reed, the company's chairman, says: "At long last, demand for permanent staff may be returning to pre-recession rates."

ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT MARKET															
1997	High	Low	Mid cap (million)	Price per share	Wdly +/-	%	P/E	1997	High	Low	Mid cap (million)	Price per share	Wdly +/-	%	P/E
100+	100.00	80.00	APAC Systems	100+	-	-	16.5	182+	91+	52.00	HSB Bermuda	125+	-	-	-
140+	21.20	14.00	AMCO Corp	140+	-	-	14.5	50+	54.50	5.45	Marine Group	47+	-	-	-
170+	55.90	40.00	AMC Int'l	170+	-	-	10.4	152+	77+	27.60	Le Sompo	52+	-	-	-
80+	5.53	4.00	Amcor Metal	80+	-	-	13.4	130+	35.50	35.00	Laureate Ent	140+	-	-	13.3
90+	7.01	5.00	Access Plus	90+	-	-	20.3	202+	100+	15.00	Leisure Group	150+	-	-	12.5
120+	7.01	5.00	Admiral Financial	120+	-	-	17.0	200+	110+	31.00	Leisure Group	220+	-	-	14.9
200+	20.50	14.00	Admiral Fin	200+	-	-	15.0	350+	250+	58.70	Le Robotics	354+	-	-	14.9
111+	9.52	6.00	African Gold	111+	-	-	14.5	14+	14+	9.50	Le Resources	9.50	-	-	-
117+	4.00	2.00	Alchemate & Bd	117+	-	-	17.0	520+	400+	30.00	Le Resources	520+	-	-	50.7
50+	3.21	2.00	Alchemate	50+	-	-	16.5	106+	81+	24.10	Leather Royal	111+	-	-	11.2
111+	3.10	2.00	Alpha-Watch	111+	-	-	11.2	125+	112+	3.88	Leather Publ	111+	-	-	9.9
82+	4.00	2.00	Alpha-Watch	82+	-	-	11.2	75+	75+	11.00	Leather Town	75+	-	-	14.8
83+	4.00	2.00	Alpha-Watch	83+	-	-	11.2	75+	75+	3.69	Leather Wines	75+	-	-	22.6
125+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	125+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	0.13	Leather Wines	0.13	-	-	-
124+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	124+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	3.69	Leather Wines	3.69	-	-	-
125+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	125+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	0.13	Leather Wines	0.13	-	-	-
126+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	126+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	3.69	Leather Wines	3.69	-	-	-
127+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	127+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	0.13	Leather Wines	0.13	-	-	-
128+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	128+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	3.69	Leather Wines	3.69	-	-	-
129+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	129+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	0.13	Leather Wines	0.13	-	-	-
130+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	130+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	3.69	Leather Wines	3.69	-	-	-
131+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	131+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	0.13	Leather Wines	0.13	-	-	-
132+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	132+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	3.69	Leather Wines	3.69	-	-	-
133+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	133+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	0.13	Leather Wines	0.13	-	-	-
134+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	134+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	3.69	Leather Wines	3.69	-	-	-
135+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	135+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	0.13	Leather Wines	0.13	-	-	-
136+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	136+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	3.69	Leather Wines	3.69	-	-	-
137+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	137+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	0.13	Leather Wines	0.13	-	-	-
138+	8.00	4.00	Alpha-Watch	138+	-	-	11.2	110+	110+	3.69	Leather Wines	3.69	-	-	-
139+															

inner tables are again abuzz with talk of rising house prices. Choose your area carefully and you could believe that the late Eighties are back again — letters from estate agents begging you to sell, gazumping and tales of friends having to take days off work to ensure that when they see the property they want they can transact immediately. Do not be deceived. The days of rampant house price inflation are gone for good. A cruel fate awaits those who have not learnt the lessons of the late 1980s.

First the facts. According to the Halifax, house prices have, on average, risen by 7.2 per cent in the year to March. According to the Nationwide, the figure is 9.7 per cent. Moreover, that relic of the housing slump, the forced repossession, has become much less common, while negative equity has been disappearing like the melting snow. Look in any estate agent's window and you will see the results. Remember those prop-

erties which had been hanging around for years as their owners clung on desperately to what they thought their property had been worth in 1989? Even some of these are now moving.

The next stage, for those who can remember housing booms of the past, is when people talk about having to buy now or face never being able to "get on the ladder again". Later, people who already own substantial houses fret about having to buy another property for fear that their children will never be able to afford to buy. In my experience, that signals the absolute peak of the market.

I doubt if it will get that bad again. Although the market is now genuinely much stronger, this is not before time. The current recovery still leaves most properties worth less than they were at the peak in 1989.

Yet not only are Kensington and

Besides, in contrast to the estate agents' hype, the housing market recovery is now slowing. On the Halifax figures, in the latest three months, seasonally adjusted, house prices rose by about 1 per cent, compared with 2.75 per cent in the previous quarter. Furthermore, last week's figures from the building societies showed the level of mortgage approvals, which is a guide to housing market activity and prices in a few months' time, continuing to fall.

It is true that price rises in London have been much larger than the national average — 17 per cent on average for Greater London. Moreover, take a look at 30 and 40 per cent increases in Kensington and Chelsea, which those on the wine bar circuit are inclined to take as some index of conditions more generally.

Chelsea not all there is to the UK, but in an economic sense, I am tempted to say that they are not part of the UK at all. They represent London's international city, located here but dancing to a different beat. Prospective buyers from across the world — Hong Kong, Japan, Russia, Germany, the Middle East and the US —



ROGER
BOOTLE

compare properties there with equivalents at home and with alternatives in Paris, Rome, New York and Tokyo. Over the last few years they have been swarming over properties in central London and engaging in a bidding war.

If, however, you are trying to sell No 39 Acacia Avenue, Penge, I doubt whether you have been besieged by Russians bearing suitcases full of cash.

In fact, even central London may be set to cool. The reason is partly that prices have risen so far already, but it is also the influence of the exchange rate, which is up by some 20 per cent over the last year. If you are comparing London prices with equivalents abroad this has to be added to the 30 or 40 per cent increase in sterling prices. On a foreign currency basis, central London prices may be up by 50 or 60 per cent on the year.

However, the real reason for believing that we are not on the brink of another national house price explosion is the connection between the property market and the economy in general. House price rises of 10 per cent or more do not mix with 2 per cent general inflation. One or other has to give.

Now you may believe that in this country rapid rates of house price rises are more deep-rooted than sustained low inflation. According to me, if something has to give, it will be inflation.

Have I got news for you? The transformation in official attitudes to inflation in general and the housing market in particular is profound.

Once the election is out of the way, no matter who wins it, if the pace of economic recovery does not show signs of slowing of its own accord, then policy action will be

taken to slow it. This means higher interest rates, higher taxes, or both. And waiting in the wings is the possible abolition of mortgage interest rate tax relief, which Treasury officials have been desperate to do to death for years.

The moral is clear. Do not make the same mistake twice. Owner occupation remains an extremely good deal, but property speculation is not a licence to print money. The supposedly unstoppable housing boom of 1988 quickly turned into the soggy market of 1989 and then the disaster of 1990.

In these times of sustained low inflation you would do well to keep in mind the warning which would have been well-heeded in 1988. As they say in another context: "Remember, prices can go down as well as up."

□ Roger Bootle's book, *The Death of Inflation - Surviving and Thriving in the Zero Era*, will be published in paperback on April 24 at £9.99 by Nicholas Brealey (0171-430 0224).

Row overshadows last AGM of mutual Halifax

BY NATHAN YATES

THE last annual meeting of the Halifax Building Society, taking place today before the £10 billion stock market flotation in June, will be marked by a row with disaffected members.

Directors of the demutualising society face fierce criticism over instructions from the board to the Halifax's 8.5 million voting members. A document included with the AGM invitation urges members not to cast their votes for two candidates who have had a sceptical attitude towards flotation.

The document identifies board nominees Serge Lourie

and Peter Judge, leaders of the anti-demutualisation Halifax Action Group, as a threat to windfall payouts. It claims that, even if elected, the two men would have no board room role after the society converts to plc status in June.

The move has outraged the Halifax Action Group, which will mount a protest at today's AGM, at Halifax's Victoria Theatre. "The board are carrying out a smear campaign against us, and we will be confronting them about these comments," said Mr Lourie, who has campaigned against the flotation since its inception.

He added: "It is a ridiculous

overreaction to say we pose a threat to free shareholders. And it is disgraceful to suggest that we would be excluded from the board of Halifax plc. We have as much right to stand as anyone else."

Mr Lourie claims that demutualisation will mean poorer deals for Halifax customers, with lower rates on savings accounts and higher mortgage costs. He will table a motion at today's meeting designed to prevent the use of flotation proceeds to boost directors' salaries to "fat cat" levels.

The Halifax denies that conversion would fuel salary rises or damage services. "The decision to become a plc has been arrived at democratically, and the overwhelming majority of members do not support the views of Mr Lourie and Mr Judge," a spokesman said. Jon Foulds, Halifax chairman, said: "It is sad that such a great organisation as the Halifax Building Society is ending on a tone of acrimony."

Directors do not expect today's row to derail the demutualisation process. Halifax members approved conversion plc status in February by a majority of 97 per cent, and the society is on course to become the country's fifth-largest bank. Tomorrow, the Halifax will start to inform members of their share allocations, giving them the option to sell, hold or place their shares in a personal equity plan (Pep).

Savers and borrowers who had more than £100 in their accounts on the qualifying date will receive 200 shares each, with a predicted value of £1,500. Members with more than £1,000 in their accounts on the same date will receive an additional variable bonus.

"I am building up a company with the intention of losing control of it to those who created it," he said. "After all, the actuaries tell me that I shall no longer be here in ten years."

AT the tender age of 73, Peter Kininmonth is going for third time lucky on the Lloyd's insurance market. Having founded two firms and at an age when most would be enjoying retirement, Mr Kininmonth has started a new insurance broker, PW Kininmonth, which has signed its first senior executives, is

launched today.

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Alliance & Leicester joins the big boys on the block

Caroline Merrell
on the stormy transition to the high street and where the A&L goes from here

Alliance & Leicester makes its stock market debut today, the first of the building societies to float in the £30 billion demutualisation bonanza of 1997. It has taken the society 18 frenzied months to prepare to shed its 144-year-old tradition of mutuality.

This period has been marked by considerable controversy, including a row with Angela Knight, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, over the Building Societies Act 1997 and resistance from larger savers to the structure of the share scheme.

Investors, such as the Duke of Rutland, objected to the democratic system of distribution under which all qualifying savers and borrowers received an equal number of 250 shares each.

The row with Mrs Knight was settled by the gift of a Christmas pudding. Some of the larger savers are still simmering with rage.

To inform these customers and the rest of its membership, about the flotation mechanism, the A&L consumed more than 800 tonnes of environmentally friendly paper. The transfer documents, mailed out in October, filled 37 lorries alone.

However, the trees have not died in vain. The projected market capitalisation of the society has risen from around £2.5 billion to £2.9 billion since the transfer document was mailed out in October. The shares are now expected to climb to 520p, compared with the 385p to 435p price estimated six months ago by JP Morgan, A&L's City advisers.

The share price may well be given a further boost on June 23, when the new bank joins the All Share Index. At that point, the index tracking funds, which together hold between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the shares in the UK market, will chase A&L.

Stockbroking analysts attribute the rise in the expected value of the bank to a recovery in the banking sector. Over the past six months, the housing market has begun to show some real signs of sustained recovery. Nearly two-thirds of Alliance & Leicester's £359 million total profit came from mortgage lending and investments.

However, profit margins on this side of the business are

BUILDING SOCIETY PAYOUTS			
Building Society	1997 Flotation Date	Number of Beneficiaries	Market Capitalisation
ALLIANCE & LEICESTER	April 21	2.4 million	£2,758 million
HALIFAX	June 2	8.5 million	£11,561 million
NORTHERN ROCK	October 1	900,000	£1,185 million
WOOLWICH	July 7	2.57 million	£3,106 million
ABBEY NATIONAL	n/a	n/a	£10,111 million
NORWICH UNION	June	3 million	£5 billion

likely to be under intense pressure over the next few years, as competition from other organisations, including those remaining mutual, grows fiercer.

Abbey National, for example, the first building society to float in 1989, has seen its share of the new mortgage market drop from 12.5 per cent last year to 2.5 per cent this year. It said it had not offered particularly competitive products this year, because it felt that most of the new business around consisted of remortgages, which do not add substantially to profits.

The new high street bank will be substantially smaller than its neighbours and many analysts believe that it will find it difficult to compete in an already over-crowded market.

For instance, Lloyds TSB has a market capitalisation of £26 billion, Barclays £16 billion, and NatWest £12 billion. Alliance & Leicester is also dwarfed by the £10 billion Abbey National, and the Halifax, which is expected to have a market capitalisation of £11 billion when it floats in the summer.

The Alliance & Leicester does not have the brand image enjoyed by the Halifax, which has a relationship with one in five households in the UK. The powerful Halifax also sets the price of mortgages for the whole industry.

The A&L expects its profits to reach £368 million this year and £413 million in 1998. It is also planning to operate a progressive dividend policy.

These shares could benefit from merger acquisition and takeover activity

Leicester achieving certain performance targets.

One of the targets is growth in earnings per share of 3 per cent above inflation. Brokers believe that this will be easily achievable. A takeover or merger would also lead to the share options being exercised.

Executive salaries will also be boosted by a bonus scheme. As much as 40 per cent of executive salary could be earned in this way. Peter White, group chief executive, earned £592,000 last year in a mixture of salary, bonus and benefits.

The society is unique among those converting in that it already has experience of re-

tail banking through its Girobank subsidiary. This bank contributed 18 per cent of the total pre-tax profits to the society last year.

BZW said: "It is the market leader in corporate cash transmission and processed more than £70 billion in 1996. Girobank handles cash, cheques, credit card payments for the corporate customers in retailing, wholesaling and other business sectors.

"Cash is collected through Post Offices. Girobank also offers a 24-hour telephone banking service, unlike the other floating societies. Unsecured personal loans are also available. Personal banking contributed 20 per cent to profits."

Justin Urquhart Stewart, managing director of Barclays Stockbrokers, thinks that Alliance & Leicester shares are a hold. He said: "A&L is an experienced bank; the shares are ones to be kept. This is better than a sale of the family silver. It's the sale of the family silver."

After the flotation of the society the management intends to grow the business organically and through cost reduction. The Alliance & Leicester has already cut branches by 11 per cent and reduced staff by 1 per cent over the past two years.

The society has a high cost to income ratio of 51 per cent on its core loans and mortgages business and 82 per cent on its Girobank subsidiary. This compares with the 33 per cent ratio achieved by Northern Rock. A&L is committed to

reducing costs by 10 per cent in the next 12 months. It is unwilling to commit itself to retaining all of its 10,000 or more staff.

Woolwich, which is bigger than A&L, employs 7,451, down 11 per cent on the previous year.

Shareholders in the Alliance & Leicester could also benefit from a takeover. Unlike the Halifax, the A&L has not waived its right to five-year protection from takeover.

However, this right will disappear if a purchase of another company is made, or if the bidder gets more than 75 per cent of the shares. BZW, the broker, believes that a bid could push share prices to between 620p to 685p, valuing the bank at £4 billion.

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Shareholders in the Alliance & Leicester could also benefit from a takeover. Unlike the Halifax

Beyond satire — probably beyond rescue

What, I wonder, would William Hogarth, "the father of British art", have made of New Baywatch (ITV, Saturday)? Not a question I ever thought I'd address on a Monday morning (or any other morning come to that) but thanks to last night's enlightening Hogarth's Progress (BBC1) I feel up to having a preliminary stab.

According to Andrew Graham-Dixon, Hogarth thought the most beautiful forms were always curvy — which is why, I suppose, he was so good at designing roundabouts. But number one in his top ten of cupulated curves was "the serpentine line" at the well-tumed heart of his much-mocked Theory of Beauty. In an age of bodice and stays, the gravity-defying serpentine lines of Gina Lee Nolin and Yasmine Bleeth would have been beyond his wildest imaginings.

We can even hazard a guess at his reaction to the subsequent

discovery that such curves still require upholstery, but that these days it is worn internally. On the one hand, he would surely have deplored such vain artifice. He painted Sir Thomas Coram without a wig and, after a quick rethink, he did the same with his own self-portrait. Would he be consumed by the same doubts if Pamela Anderson Lee were to sit for him? "Sorry Pam, the silicone will have to go. I'll make the pug a bigger to make it for you."

As Graham-Dixon made clear, Hogarth was fascinated by "what happens when you strip away the flesh of a human being". In The Convicted Criminal a dog is seen chewing at the guts of the dissected torso. No prizes for guessing what Fido would be gnawing at had his master ever got round to engraving The Convicted Lifeguard.

On the other hand, Hogarth was an accomplished businessman and fully aware of the commercial

appeal of a little lubricious criticism dressed up as fine art. Is not the equally aptly named C.J. Hooker simply the Moll Hackabout of her day? If television had existed, don't you think The Harlot's Progress would have been worth at least a mini-series? Just think of the fun Hogarth would have had with the casting.

But if Hogarth would have appreciated the commercial potential of New Baywatch, he would have hated the fact that it was American. He liked things to be British — beef-steak not beefcake. In fact the only thing that might have saved it from a satirical mauling would have been if his arch enemy, the classically-minded William Kent, had taken a dip to it first.

What David Hasselhoff, star and producer, of the series would make of Hogarth is less certain. Indeed, after Saturday's dire open-

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

ing episode, what Hasselhoff makes of anything is unclear as he appears to have taken leave of his senses. His contributions to a paper-thin plot that had less to it than a high-high-orange swim-suit, were three blink-and-you-missed-them (if you were lucky) scenes that had something to do with vampires. As everyone else was rushing about being search and rescue experts and flirting with the

firemen, it was all very confusing. Had Hogarth been painting this nonsense in one of his more high-minded moods, he would have had Congreve, Dryden and Shakespeare once again consigned to a dog-cart joined, I fear, by The New Adventures of Superman.

But before we get caught up in what Hogarth might have made of Lois Lane's serpentine line, let us move on. I had a spot of bother with the weekend's comedy — to wit, being too young to enjoy Last of the Summer Wine (BBC1), a series which breaks the promise of its title by returning with monotonous regularity, and too old to enjoy Sunnyside Farm (BBC2, Friday). However, if the latter goes on to become the sort of cult success I think it might, this is definitely the last time I will be admitting that. I'll even own up to taking a pathetic pride in understanding a joke about the girl from Echobell. Now, I realise that with that

sentence I've probably lost a lot of you, but that is the sort of series that Sunnyside Farm is: isolating. Its foul-mouthed, much of its humour is derived from the slurry pit (a technical term I picked up from The Archers) and it enthusiastically embraces the sort of habits that force other television critics to find new jobs. If and when you get over the shock, it's funny... although I'm going to wait a few weeks before deciding whether "very" should be inserted in that sentence.

No credit, however, for Last of the Summer Wine, a series which lost its nerve years ago and now pursues a relentless policy of cheap laughs and loud caricatures, regardless of the damage done to Roy Clarke's original and brilliant idea. However, as Clarke wrote last night's episode he doesn't appear to mind and nor, after 25 years, does its mysteriously loyal audience. I wonder what Hogarth would have made of Nora Batty?

also turned out to include those accomplished thespians Michael Kitchen and Beth Goddard. Kitchen turns out to be even better at comedy than his performance in Reckless suggested, while Goddard provides a straight but very pretty foil for the quite extraordinary performance put in by Daniels. It's part Harry H. Corben and it's part something very strange indeed. Full credit to Andy de Emmony, the director — simply for keeping his nerve.

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5.00am Business Breakfast (99599)

7.00 BBC Breakfast News (70471978)

9.05 Election Call with the Home Secretary, Michael Howard. Simultaneous broadcast with Radio 4 (T) (8170247)

10.00 Style Challenge (35627)

10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (46247)

11.00 News (T) and weather (4350711)

11.05 The Really Useful Show (T) (9839402)

11.25 Snooker: World Championship The first session of Steve Davis's match against Dave McLean Plus, the conclusion of Darren Morgan v Gary Wilkinson (3062866)

12.35pm Good Living (9417197)

1.00 News (T) and weather (49773)

1.30 Regional News and weather (50047063)

1.45 Neighbours (T) (9835529)

2.10 Snooker: World Championship

Double Donnelly introduces live coverage as Ronnie O'Sullivan completes his first-round match with Mick Price (4205711)

3.30 Playdays (T) (6722889) 3.50 The New Yogi Bear Show (T) (644247) 3.55 Bodger and Badger (T) (6822828) 4.10 Casper (T) (812179) 4.35 50/50 (T) (7144179) 5.00 Newsround (T) (5855228)

5.10 Blue Peter (T) (3031529)

5.35 Neighbours (T) (219711)

6.00 News (T) and weather (792)

6.30 Regional News (T) (104975)

6.55 Election Broadcast: UK Independence Party (T) (172537)

7.00 Aunty's TV Favours Ben Elton looks back at his career: members of the Only Fools and Horses Appreciation Society meet "Boyle" (T) (2334)

7.30 Here and Now Investigation into Incidences of domestic violence in the Church (T) (228)

8.00 EastEnders Sanjay is offered a business opportunity which seems too good to be true (T) (1062)

8.30 Panorama: The Leader Interview David Dimbleby talks to Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats (T) (7888)

9.00 News (T) regional news and weather (162063)

9.50 Election Broadcast: Labour (T) (673565)

10.00 Interception (1994) with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, Lorraine Bracco and Martin Landau. An architect takes stock of his life, resolving to get himself back on track — until a tragedy forces him to take evasive action. Directed by Mark Rydall (T) (25402)

11.30 Film 97 with Barry Norman Barry reviews the Whoopi Goldberg comedy Eddie, Donnie Brasco, with Al Pacino and Johnny Depp and Wes Craven's Scream (T) (31266)

12.00 The Mrs Merton Show In Las Vegas with the actress Bar Derek and singer Engelbert Humperdinck (T) (67700)

12.30am This is a Hijack (1973) with Adam Rourke, Nevin Brand and Jay Robinson. A debt-ridden gambler takes the risk of hijacking a jet and holding the occupants to ransom. Directed by Barry Pollock (T) (64990)

2.00-2.05 Weather (3932822)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes' numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ remote. To record a programme for the programme you wish to record, VideoPlus+ ("VideoPlus" and "Video Programmer" are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.)

6.00am GMTV (6358624)

6.25 Chain Letters (T) (2072947)

9.55 Regional News (T) (3103334)

10.00 The Time, the Place (20150)

10.30 This Morning (T) (G177995)

12.20pm Regional News (T) (022063)

12.30 News (T) and weather (9403716)

12.55 Home and Away (T) (271951)

1.20 Look Who's Talking (1989) with Julie Ally, John Travolta and Olympia Dukakis, and the voice of Bruce Willis. Romantic comedy about the relationship between a single mother and the cab driver who took her to the hospital, as seen through the eyes of her baby son. Directed by Amy Heckerling (7479959)

3.20 News (T) (7332626)

3.30 Total TV (T) (6874247) 3.40 Caribou Kitchen (9425402) 3.50 Donald Duck Cartoon (9421985) 4.00 The Little Mermaid (6846003) 4.20 The Famous Five (T) (885402) 4.50 The Big Bang (T) (1311228)

5.10 Sorted (1620247)

5.40 News (T) and weather (469889)

6.00 Home and Away (T) (T) (203688)

6.25 HTV Weather (123959)

6.30 The West Tonight (19904)

6.55 Election Broadcast: Labour (T) (167605)

7.00 British Academy Awards for Craft 1997 Paying homage to those working behind the scenes in film and television. Hosted by Julian Clary (5131)

7.58 Video Nation Election Shorts (505685)

8.00 Top Gear Motorsport The British Formula Three championship: a driver's eye view of the Daytona 24-hour race and the Mintex National Rally series (T) (9824)

8.30 The Antiques Show Francis Stock meets the world's most successful antique dealer (T) (61317)

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PATTERN 47
Designs on growth at Laura Ashley

BUSINESS

MONDAY APRIL 21 1997

Crest faces sternest test as Alliance & Leicester floats

By MARIANNE CURPHEY
AND GAVIN LUMSDEN

CRESTCO, the company behind the new Stock Exchange paperless electronic share settlement system, claimed last night to be "reasonably confident" that the system would survive today's Alliance & Leicester flotation. It admitted, however, that the real crunch would come next Monday when trades were signed off under the five-day settlement rule. For

Crest, the A&L float is the toughest test of its short life as up to 2.2 million new shareholders have the option to sell their shares immediately.

Some brokers have warned of a "meltdown" and say the system will struggle to cope with the volume of trades over the next few days.

Hugh Simpson, CrestCo company secretary, said Crest had taken steps to address brokers' concerns. Opening hours had been extended to enable transactions to be processed

ed more swiftly. Staff would be at their desks from 2am today. He said last night: "We are reasonably confident that the system will be able to cope."

His comments were less bullish than those of Iain Saville, CrestCo's chief executive, who claimed last week that he was "confident that these measures will assist the market to handle the expected volumes as efficiently as possible".

Today's flotation kicks off a sum-

mer of conversions that will test Crest to the limit. A&L's share price could begin trading at 500p, providing an average £1,250 windfall for its 2.5 million members. The Halifax, Woolwich and Northern Rock building societies and Norwich Union, the life insurer, will create 1.6 million shareholders. More than 1.2 million A&L members opted to receive their shares in certificate form. Nobody knows when, or if, they will want to sell, releasing their

unwanted paper into a system run by a computer.

Crest has changed its computer system and pledged to open on Saturdays if necessary to allow extra time for shareholders transactions to be processed. But the system had problems just coping with the busy period at the end of the last financial year when investors "bed-and-breakfasted" their shares. Trading volumes rose 60,000 then, up from their normal level of

40,000. After the Halifax flotation in June they could easily hit 150,000.

Justin Urquhart Stewart, of Barclays Stockbrokers, urged members to hold on to the shares: "If the privatisations were selling off the family silver, the conversions of the building societies mean someone has been at granny's jewellery box. It is not often that someone hands you a blue chip stock for nothing."

Joining the big boys, page 50

Cordiant agencies to float after split

By ERIC REEVE

CORDIANT, the £800 million advertising group, today will announce a full demerger that will see Saatchi & Saatchi and Bates Worldwide, its two main agencies, floated separately on the stock market.

The break-up, devised by Bob Seeler, Cordiant's chief executive, and SBC Warburg, its adviser, has the backing of British and US institutional shareholders. They are gambling that autonomy will allow Saatchi and Bates to thrive. Cordiant's shares have underperformed the market in the past year.

Zenith, the media-buying arm of Cordiant, will be owned equally by the two agencies after the demerger. There are no plans to float Zenith.

Cordiant shares closed on Friday at 130p, valuing the group at £577 million. Cordiant and SBC Warburg think a demerger could add several hundred million pounds of value. Advertising agencies are typically valued at 1.2 times their revenue. Based on this calculation, Cordiant, with annual revenues of almost £800 million, is arguably worth £950 million or more.

The demerger has prompted speculation that Maurice and Charles Saatchi, founders of Saatchi & Saatchi, will try to regain control when the shares begin trading.

Co-op 'could face' £1bn bid this week

By MARTIN WALLER, DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

ANDREW REGAN, the entrepreneur trying to take over large chunks of the Co-operative movement, hopes to have his long-delayed £1.15 billion bid in place as soon as the end of the week, despite two months of rebuff and a "dirty trick" row that blew up between him and his quarry over the weekend.

He and his Galileo bidding vehicle will face a formidable legal hurdle. They have until 4pm tomorrow to provide information to the High Court of any confidential information on the Co-op obtained from two of its executives who were suspended last week. The judge must then rule that a bid can go ahead.

The Regan camp were confident last night that the legal deadline could be met and the necessary judgment be forthcoming, possibly on Friday. This would allow a formal bid for the Co-operative Wholesale Society to be announced. The deadline was imposed by the court after CWS obtained an injunction against Galileo on Friday, a move that derailed plans to announce a bid that day. "It's full steam ahead," said a spokesman for Mr Regan. "We hope to move forward this week. All our ducks are in a row."

If Mr Regan and Lanica, his

main vehicle which set up Galileo to further his ambitions for the CWS, finally succeed in tabling a bid, it will come at a time when relations between him and the Co-op are at their lowest possible ebb. As well as the legal move, which the CWS insists was not merely designed to head off his formal offer, a row has blown up over secret meetings between him and the two suspended CWS executives, Allan Green and David Chambers, and their earlier relationship with another of his vehicles.

The High Court on Friday watched a video of one such meeting, in a pub car park, produced by the CWS as it asked for an injunction. The Co-op admits using private detectives to track the movements of the two, the head of the CWS's retail operation and his deputy, but says surveillance ended as soon as the injunction was granted.

Graham Melmoth, the CWS chief executive, has also written to Lord Hambro, head of Hambros, Lanica's merchant bank, referring to a payment made in 1995 into a Cayman Islands company, Trellis International. At that time Mr Regan's Hobson food business was in negotiations with CWS over a supply agreement.

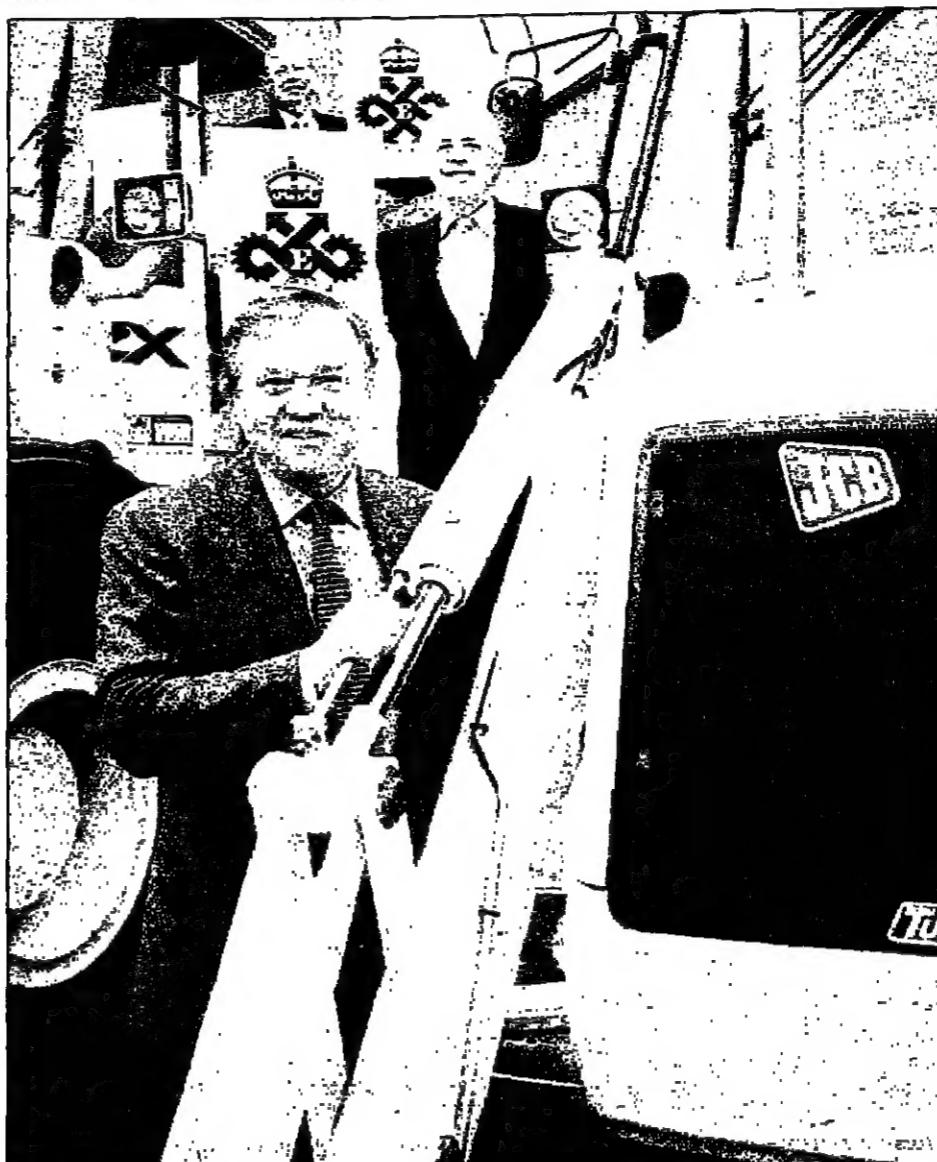
In those talks, the two suspended executives were acting on behalf of the CWS. A

sum of £2 million was paid to Trellis by Hobson as an intermediary once the deal was struck, but Mr Melmoth says his company has no record of any such transaction or any third party involved.

This is disputed by the Regan camp, which says the payment was known of "at the highest levels" at the CWS, and accuses the latter of raising it improperly in an attempt to "publicly hang" Mr Green and Mr Chambers after their contact with Mr Regan was discovered. The Hambros letter, which concludes by asking the bank to forward "any evidence of fraud committed against CWS", has further soured the atmosphere between the two parties.

If Mr Regan is granted legal clearance to continue with his offer, he will first call a meeting of all 300 corporate members of the CWS. This is not seen as difficult, as he will need the support of just ten of them. But Co-op insiders say the necessary 75 per cent majority at such a meeting to deal with Galileo will be almost impossible to secure.

Mr Regan has found another ally, Allied Irish Banks, which is keen to take over the highly regarded Co-op Bank in any break-up of the CWS. But a report that J Sainsbury wanted to buy some of the larger food stores has been denied.



Full load: John Appleby managing director of wheeled shovel loaders, top, and Neil Bedford, centre, managing director of backhoe loaders, celebrate the awards with Sir Anthony Bamford

JCB scoops up its 13th award

THE JCB Group, the Staffordshire plant maker, has

managed another double in this year's Queen's Export Awards, winning honours for its wheeled loader and backhoe loader divisions.

This brings the number of wins for JCB since 1969 to thirteen. Exports of wheeled

loaders have more than trebled over the past three years, while those for backhoe loaders rose 64 per cent.

Among the big names winning this year are British Steel, IBM United Kingdom, US owned but ranked fifth among top UK exporters, GEC and Toyota, one of the

Awards, pages 42-45

Business ready for Labour in power

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BUSINESS overwhelmingly believes that Labour will form the next government, and captains of industry are not worried about the prospect of Labour in power after May 1.

The findings come from separate surveys by the Institute of Management and Dun & Bradstreet, the business information company.

Business leaders judge that Labour will win next week's general election, according to evidence from the Institute of Management today. Its latest survey shows that 81 per cent of managers believe that Labour is most likely to win the election. Only 15 per cent expect the Conservatives to win.

Although the figures suggest that business believes that the election is a foregone conclusion, the findings are significant because they are in stark contrast to what business wants, measured by its own voting intentions.

The institute's findings are the first significant figures to support the general business view that while business does not much want Labour to win, it expects it to do so. Roger Young, IM director-general, says today: "The findings show managers' bets seem to be riding on Tony Blair."

But company directors are expected to be called on this week to support the Conservatives. Business leaders are likely to hear calls for 'Tory support' at the annual conference on Wednesday of the Institute of Directors. Lord Young, IoD president, is a former Conservative Cabinet minister.

But business is likely to send mixed signals about the economy this week too. In the final significant business figures before the election, large-scale industrial surveys by the Confederation of British Industry and the British Chambers of Commerce are expected to give further warnings that the strength of sterling is hitting the competitiveness of UK companies.

Confidence among company directors over the economic outlook is at its lowest level since September 1995, a poll from SBC Warburg claims. It says that six months ago 48 per cent of directors were confident of an improvement compared with just 14 per cent now.

MGAM in the bidding for Axiom

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell yesterday confirmed Australian newspaper reports that Morgan Grenfell Asset Management is among the bidders for Axiom, the manager of some A\$18 billion of funds for the New South Wales government. If it wins, MGAM would use Axiom to bid for the management of other government funds in Australia. MGAM faces stiff competition. Australian analysts give National Australia Bank, one of the four known bidders, the best chance of winning Axiom.

GDP forecast

Economic growth will accelerate throughout the rest of the year but inflation poses little immediate threat, a report concludes today. The Chartered Institute of Marketing predicts that GDP will rise 1.3 per cent in the second quarter and continue to grow in the second half. GDP figures for the first quarter are due out on Friday with quarterly rate forecast to show growth of 0.8 per cent, taking the annual rate from 2.6 per cent to 2.9 per cent.

BSkyB considers pay-per-view soccer

By JASON NISSE

BSkyB is considering pay-per-view football matches in the UK in June when England appears in a four-team tournament in France, playing against the host nation, Italy and Brazil.

The UK rights to live coverage of the tournament, a warm-up for next year's World Cup, have been sold to BSkyB by the French football association with edited highlights expected to be shown on ITV.

BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, is looking at showing the England games on a pay-per-view basis, charging viewers between £5 and £10.

A spokesman said no final decision had been made on the coverage. A final decision is expected in early May.

If BSkyB goes ahead it will be the first football games shown on a pay-per-view basis and will test demand for converting coverage of the Premiership to pay-per-view – expected to occur in two years.

BSkyB has enjoyed great

success with pay-per-view boxing, winning over 600,000 viewers from the Bruno-Lyon fight last year, which was shown in the UK at 4am on a Sunday. Last week it announced it would be showing Prince Nassem's fight at the Nymex arena in May on a pay-per-view basis.

The Football Association, which is in charge of England games at home, is not happy about pay-per-view coverage of the tournament in France, but said it could exert no more than moral pressure to have the games shown on a free view to Sky Sports subscribers.

"We are not terribly in favour of pay-per-view at this stage," said Phil Carting, the FA's commercial director. "It does not provide the right level of delivery for our sports and this would be of concern to our sponsors."

Home games played by England and coverage of the World Cup are covered by a prohibition that does not allow them to be shown through pay-per-view.

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BSkyB has enjoyed great

ARE YOU PAYING TOO MUCH FOR YOUR LIFE ASSURANCE?

There are many Banks, Building Societies, and Insurance Companies offering to arrange for you their own company's policies.

At Direct Life & Pension Services we are Independent Financial Advisers. We don't supply just one company's policies but are able to provide a range of policies from many different companies.

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Consider the illustrations below for monthly premiums, on a 20 year, £100,000 level term assurance.

Male & female both aged 35 next birthday and non-smokers	Male & female both aged 45 next birthday and non-smokers
Barclays Life	35.40
Commercial Union	36.00
Nationwide Life	37.81
Friends Provident	41.58
Black Horse Life	46.38
Scottish Amicable	48.00
Scottish Life	58.51
We can arrange this for	25.02
	53.30

We can arrange this for

53.30

We can arrange this for